

B.M. Adam

CLASS STRUGGLE

THE LESSONS
OF CHILE

R.
A.
C.

LEFT
UNITY

COMMUNISTS AND
REFORMISM
IN AN IMPERIALISED COUNTRY

The Rot in
TUCAR

a WOMEN'S
MOVEMENT?

BROWNE - MERRIGAN GROUP

What Kind of Party?
DOES THE WORKING CLASS NEED



20p
no. 2 Nov.

**IRISH
WORKERS
GROUP**

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OF CHILE

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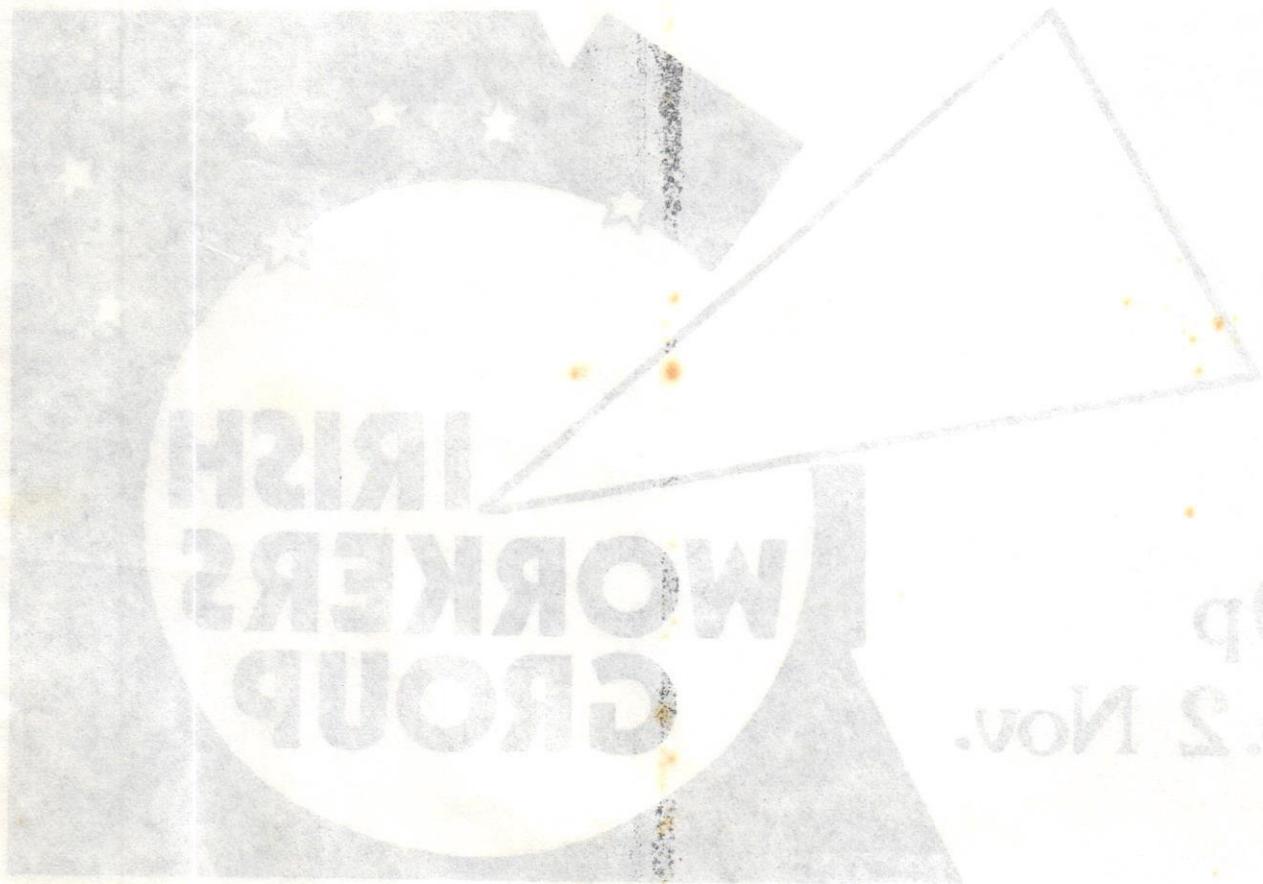
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IRISH WORKER'S GROUP
POLITICAL TRIBUTE TO
SEAMUS COSTELLO

The murder of Seamus Costello represents the tragic loss of one of the most outstanding leaders of Irish Republicanism. Because of his individual contribution to that movement, his unquestionable personal ability, his enormous political potential, Seamus Costello stood high in the estimation of thousands involved in the fight against British Imperialism and for socialism.

Precisely because of his record of leadership and his reputation, Marxists must seriously evaluate that record, not to academically 'prove' anything, but in order to learn the lessons of a political career which so much embodied the republican tradition. As Seamus Costello in his own time was compelled to reassess that tradition in order to creatively develop it as an instrument for achieving socialism, he would have had no time for those who, intentionally or not, would turn him into an 'idol' in honouring his name and memory.

As with James Connolly whose followers did just that, revolutionary socialists can have no time for 'idol worship'. The working class struggle for national independence and socialism if it is to grow, demands that in a spirit of fraternal sorrow, we acknowledge our duty to say what we think.

Seamus Costello devoted his whole life to driving British Imperialism out of Ireland. That in itself would indicate the political quality and integrity of the man. However, in playing a major part in reassessing the 'physical force' tradition and acknowledging that the social and economic question of class politics and perspectives held the key to achieving that goal of socialism, he showed the developing capacity to originate new ideas and discard the old.

It was Seamus Costello's tragedy that 'Marxism' was dominated, particularly in national liberation struggles, by Stalinism on a world scale. Whatever stimulus it supplied to Republicanism in the 60s it was inevitably to lead to the reformist cul de sac of the Officials and the dead-end of "Sinn Fein The Workers' Party" so-called. In this political

milieu, faced with the outbreak of armed struggle in the north, Seamus Costello could not find his way to the only revolutionary marxist doctrine and tradition which could have truly provided him with the political and military answers he sought.

In the formation of the IRSP it was clear that he had not broken with the conspiratorial and elitist methods of Republicanism. The decay, split and further decay in the IRSP in the aftermath of its attempt to recover from the murderous campaign of the Officials, reveals the truth of this view.

It is to their shame that the so-called 'Trotskyists' in the IRSP could, in the split, leave no record of sustained, principled activity as a positive gain from their fight against Seamus Costello's style of leadership and political method.

That Seamus Costello remained at his death a convinced republican, with all the bad and good that this entails in political style, programme and activity is a reflection and indictment of the state of Irish Marxism.

That a man such as he with so much political potential could not be won outright to the revolutionary internationalist doctrine and traditions of Leninism and Trotskyism, which alone can match the republican capacity for heroism and self-sacrifice while surpassing it as an instrument for struggle and theoretical analysis, starkly underlines the irrelevance so far of marxism and marxists in Ireland.

The debt we owe to Seamus Costello will only be paid in full when that state of affairs is changed.

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OCTOBER 1977

EDITORIAL

SIGNS OF A FIGHT BACK

The Irish Election and the massive rejection of the Coalition has proved to be of more general political significance than was first realised. It is becoming clearer that after years of passivity the Southern Irish working class in rejecting the coalition were showing the first expression of their determination to fight back. At the moment we are seeing another expression of this determination, and this, significantly, is against the very roots of reformism within the Irish working class, i.e. against the trade union bureaucracy.

The outbreak of unofficial strikes, the growing disillusionment with particular unions and the attempt to join new ones, the left phraseology of the bureaucrats, all point to a crisis developing within the trade union movement on the question of democracy.

The major question facing Irish working class militants, North and South, will be increasingly whether the unions are to be a force for the defence of our class, or a bulwark for the state and the bosses against it.

In Ireland, the latter has been the case to an extraordinary degree, because of the role of Imperialism, producing the swollen bureaucratic and cynical ICTU leadership and the Northern Committee. The working class has now in a confused way begun to challenge that role by seeking through direct action unofficially to oppose employers' wage policies. It is necessary that this confusion, however positively expressed, does not lead to the sterility of 'new-unionism' already emerging in some form in the Ferenka dispute. The Irish working class has deeply syndicalist tendencies, strengthened all the more by the movement from the land to new forms of industrial employment. To put the fight against the employers and the bureaucrats on a political plane capable of uniting all sections of our class, we need to begin to agitate for the building and extending of all local committees of struggle in the trade union movement into a

broad 32-County rank and file movement armed with a fighting programme against both the policies of the bosses and state - unemployment, inflation, wages, repression etc., and the undemocratic control of the trade union movement by the bureaucrats.

WORKERS ACTION COUNCIL - BELFAST

-ACTION AGAINST TORTURE

The West Belfast Action Council March of 600 workers to the City Hall on Wednesday Nov. 9th, protesting about torture in the North, has shown that what the IWG alone has been arguing for consistently in the last few years is at last being realised. The marchers demanded a trade union inquiry into the detention of suspects in Castlereagh and other police stations in the North, and further stated that in future anti-unionist workers would be committed to taking up all struggles.

The WBAC leaders must be congratulated. They have shown that anti-unionist workers, displaying increasing militancy in economic struggles, have the ability to challenge directly the most sharply felt features of British imperialist repression. In so doing, they have immediately broken out of the sterile limits of the present platform of the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression and concretely laid the basis for taking it forward to a policy of direct action on class demands.

JOIN TUCAR

ALL TRADE UNIONISTS ARE ELIGIBLE
TO JOIN THE ALL-IRELAND TRADE UNION
CAMPAIGN AGAINST REPRESSION.
JOIN NOW AND FIGHT FOR WORKING
CLASS DIRECT ACTION AGAINST
REPRESSIVE LAWS
SPECIAL COURTS
TORTURE
AND FOR A LABOUR MOVEMENT INQUIRY
INTO TORTURE AND REPRESSION.
Send £1 membership fee to D. Whelan,
33 Lissadell drive, Dublin 12.

EDITORIAL

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The outbreak of anti-union strikes,
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The major question facing Irish
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In Ireland, the latter has been the
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SOCIALISTS AND THE ELECTIONS

The latest June Election raised for marxists the problem of how tactically to relate their programmes concretely to a situation where the Labour Party (a reformist movement based on the trade unions) was contesting for power within the bourgeois state and for the support of the working class. Here marxists were faced with the problem of reformism. Without a concrete strategy to break workers from the ideas and practices of the "democratic" illusions of the "peaceful road to socialism" contained in reformism the Irish working class struggle will be ultimately led to disaster.

MILITANT GROUP

For the Militant Group reformism holds no such dangers or problems. In fact for this tendency, deep inside the Labour Party it doesn't even exist. The question of achieving socialism is simply a matter of having left-wing resolutions passed at L.P. conferences and when the leadership inevitably fail to carry them out, the rank and file will then turn to the Militant Group! Needless to say, as events since 1969 have shown so clearly, this is pure phantasy - the essence of Militant's reformist perspective which not only explains why they and the other left forces inside the party have remained so weak and impotent despite the betrayal of the last four years. It has been the sterility of left reformism as an alternative to the right wing reformist leadership that has in effect kept the Party in Coalition. There is no difference in method or perspective between them, merely phrasemongering. The Militant Group, wedded to parliamentary cretinism and incapable of learning anything from its experience, is doomed to even greater impotence.

SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT

The SWM approach to the elections involved a tactic which like the Militant, actually strengthened the hold of reformist ideas on groups of workers. Formally committed to building a party of the Leninist type, SWM ignore the L.P. except at election time. Having no analysis of

reformism, they believe that a revolutionary party will emerge as the result of fighting economically around the basic issues of trade union reforms, wages and conditions. All other issues are seen as less important than this perspectiveless notion of building SWM. Until a large movement exists they believe they cannot have a programme to guide and direct their activity. With such apolitical syndicalism the SWM in the most sectarian way regard the whole question of elections involving the Labour Party as a diversion from the bread and butter questions. It is this which explains the rank opportunism of their WORKER Election Special. It called on workers to vote for anyone who even "verbally" opposed repression and supported wage struggles. This meant supporting the "Communist" Party, Sinn Fein The Workers Party, Merrigan & Browne, and presumably those Labour official candidates standing in three-corner fights with Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. What workers were to do in those constituencies where only a Labour candidate stood who had no record of left phrasemongering was standing, the wiseacres of SWM had nothing to say.

The SWM membership know that the CP, SF(WP) as well as Merrigan and Browne are all in some form left reformist, that is, among other things, they are characterised as saying one thing and doing another. Their counterparts in Chile led our class to slaughter and defeat. Why support, then, one species of this type against another species of the same type who equally are guilty of saying one thing and doing another, all at the expense of the working class. For SWM the question is clearly how to 'expose' the reformists by degrees - first the L.P. leadership to be exposed by the left reformists, then the left reformists by...SWM?

The 'real world', alas, is different. SWM's failure to grow in the last five years reveals the bankruptcy of such muddled opportunism. Reformism is strengthened by supporting these candidates, and that uncritically. The hold of reformism cannot be broken by degrees through a process of proving rationality to the working class that marxists have the most superior and correct ideas. This is rationalism, not marxism.

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MOVEMENT FOR A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

The MSR (section of the USFI), adopted a similar opportunistic tactic but from a different perspective of party building. Supporting uncritically left-reformist CP, SF(WP) candidates, they actively canvassed for the Merrigan and Browne campaigns of "Independent Labour". Not a word of criticism about the phoney solutions peddled by this campaign, and that at a time when we have seen left-reformist movements derail potential revolutionary struggles in Spain, Portugal and Italy in the last 3 years.

MSR were applying their Irish version of the "class struggle tendency" perspective, from which it is believed the progressive current around Merrigan and Browne inevitably expresses a process for the emergence of a revolutionary opposition inside and outside the Labour Party. In order to help the development, MSR passively accommodate to it, opportunistically ignoring the question of reformism and programmatic principle. Instead, a "discussion club" approach around the most abstract question of a Trade Union 'plan' for the economy will suffice for the creation of a cadre. Like the SWM, MSR had nothing to say to workers faced with a Labour Party candidate in a three-way fight; such is the scientific marxism of the USFI.

LEAGUE FOR A WORKERS REPUBLIC

The LWR group, Irish section of the OCRFI adopted a similar tactic as MSR and for exactly the same perspective. Of the three groups, LWR is the only one with any serious consideration of the Labour Party and a tradition of the role of the Workers Government slogan. It thus might have been expected to make a case for critical support for the Labour Party candidates. However, they issued no statement, nor in their conference perspectives documents (Sept, Oct 1977) do they explain what position they did take. The fact is, of course, that LWR openly canvassed uncritically for Merrigan and Browne - what LWR describes, after the elections, as a "hasty ill-prepared and politically confused campaign (p.5 W.R. no. 65). This was in fact pure left-reformism. In methods and perspectives its essence was no different from the Labour Party candidates being opposed; or the Militant Group or even the Labour Party leadership. Again, uncritical support for fraudulent solutions like these

strengthened the hold of reformist ideas and practice over what correctly the LWR saw as a current of militants looking for new answers, new methods and a break with the cul de sac of reformism, left or right. Unless there had existed a real alternative through the Merrigan and Browne campaign, e.g. support by these for direct rank and file action against unemployment, inflation, wage restraint, coalition and repression, this would have constituted, however politically confused the overall solutions might have been, a real alternative to the Labour Party, in a context of the real and significant stratum of workers to whom these candidates spoke, which could have been the basis of a campaign. The position should have been critical support of the Labour Party. For, it is obvious to workers that they do need a party to represent them. Because they are still dominated by reformist consciousness this is seen by them in purely parliamentary terms, a party which they expect to defend the working class against nakedly pro-capitalist FF and FG. Despite the record of betrayals of Labour in the last four years, therefore, the fact is that working class militants have no other party yet except that based on the trade union movement. To turn them away to equally barren solutions as a real alternative at a time when they need new methods to fight capitalism is shameful opportunism.

The Merrigan-Brown campaign confused and strengthened the ideas and practice of reformism. Its net result was to replace one Labour T.D. with another one weak left-reformist. The class gained precisely nothing.

LWR's perspective is similar to the MSR group's. The current emerging around the Merrigan-Browne group is seen as the forum for militants "who will lay the basis of a revolutionary party in a break with the apparatus and outlook of reformism" (LWR perspective document p. 27). But this does not mean that the LWR will openly fight for the 1938 Transitional Programme in this current, the programme which they say can meet the needs of the working class in its fight against capitalism and imperialism. To do so now, they say would be an attempt to "speed up events by antics which

would only serve to isolate the work of Trotskyists from the mass movement (p. 27). This is the familiar language of opportunism - "the time is not ripe yet" goes the refrain of all centrists faced with the task of confronting the working class directly with their principles and programmes against the panaceas of reformism. How then will the "break from the apparatus and outlook of reformism" take place if not in a fight for that programme by marxists. For the LWR it will fall to "events", the "class struggle", the "historic process" as a purely objective development which will miraculously lead the elements of a new party, like the pied piper, to the land of socialism. But as the 'history' and 'events' are not 'ready' so LWR will opportunistically play second fiddle to the left reformists, posing such contentless and formalist perspectives as an all-Ireland Labour Party and the Constituent Assembly as the signposts for 'history' and 'events' to follow. It is this methodology which underlies LWR's purely abstract and passive role on the sidelines in the last four years. Despite what they say in their documents about the '38 Transitional Programme, being one not of passive comment but of active intervention and leadership (our emphasis, p.27), they provide another cul-de-sac.

OUR POSITION

The IWG believe that all elections pose for the working class what kind of government it needs if the effects of capitalism are not to be borne by the masses. For revolutionaries in Ireland, therefore, it constitutes a problem of how to fight for their programmes in a situation where

- (1) revolutionary socialists are weak, few and divided;
- (2) where the masses are still influenced by the democratic illusions about parliament and the ballot box as a basis for changing society.

Concretely, where the trade unions have a party, this means that despite all its betrayals, however weak and distorted it may be, workers have no alternatives in terms of their reformist perspectives other than to vote Labour in the belief

from next column: Its programme was muddled and blurred on women, unemployment and the national question.

and determination that the policies and leadership can be changed. This is the power of all reformist ideas over the working class. Therefore, to deal with this practically, revolutionaries must propose a programme of policies and methods which meet the needs of the class in a number of key fronts: unemployment, wages, inflation, women, against coalition; and call for critical support for Labour in an attempt to draw sections of the Labour Party into direct action with rank and file workers for these goals.

We say to workers: if you are right about the Labour Party, then it can be won to join in action for those policies. If it, as we believe, cannot, then groups of rank and file workers and trade union branches and shop-steward committees, socialists, tenants organisations, womens groups, and republicans are the basis of building an independent movement which will not only be the basis for achieving our immediate goal but also of building a genuine Workers Party and of smashing capitalism itself. Only in this political strategy of United-Front critical support for the Labour Party can we break the hold of reformism. At no time does this mean subordinating our criticisms of the Labour Party or reformists (left or otherwise) in the interests of spurious unity.

I.W.G. AND INDEPENDENT LABOUR

We adopted essentially this method with this campaign. We called for votes for Merrigan. However, as we have said above of the left groups, this was a mistake. In our case though criticising in our own leaflets Merrigan's campaign and proposing a programme of direct action, our position was the outcome of inexperience; it did not flow from an opportunistic method, as in the case of the other left groups. After continuing discussion, we have corrected our mistakes.

BOTTOM DOG CAMPAIGN

We did not call for support for the 'B.D. candidate' because (1) the B.D. represents no base in any section of the Irish working class - it is not a rank and file paper; (2) it was a stunt whereby the MSR applied their 'class struggle' approach.

← ENDS.

WHAT KIND OF PARTY ?

THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

The Irish working class is demoralised and deeply divided. Its living standards have been driven down; unemployment has ravaged the lives of hundreds of thousands North and South, and women's enslavement is deeper than perhaps anywhere else in Europe. Repression by courts, police and army against strikers and political activists has intensified year after year. Furthermore, the period we are in is one in which capitalism world-wide is in a deepening crisis.

The election showed that workers clearly understood the futility of supporting the Labour Party as a defender of their interests, but no alternative was offered capable of meeting their needs.

At the moment sections of our class, through the outbreak of unofficial strikes, show that they are able and willing to fight not only their own exploiters but also those bureaucrats in the trade union and labour movement who have attempted time and again to strangle the real fighting power of the class in the interests of preserving their role as brokers between labour and capital.

WHAT A SOCIALIST PARTY MUST DO

Sectional struggles, however, will not in themselves overcome the historical divisions in the Irish working class whatever the display of courage and determination. What is required to defend immediate needs and to put the class on a war-footing are class-wide and political solutions based upon this direct action of workers. A programme of tactics and strategy for the class as a whole, worked out through the Party, is the only possible basis for uniting the working class - the weak with the strong, employed and unemployed, general and craft workers, men and women, Northern and Southern.

As the Labour Party has shown, it is disastrous for a socialist party to put up candidates for election by workers if that party does not base its socialist strategy upon the economic power of the working class at the point of production. A socialist party whose political programme is not based on that power in action as the means of ending capitalism is inevitably a reformist party.

That is, it separates the trade-union struggles of workers for economic reforms as one arena and the parliamentary struggle for social reform within capitalism as another. As the history of social-democratic parties shows, this leads the reformist party to attack the working class in the interests of the capitalist state. Witness the Labour Party strangling the working class with calls for "sacrifices", wage agreements, betrayals of women's rights and repression and strike-breaking by courts, police and army, and collaboration with Loyalism and the British Army.

Therefore, it is not enough for any new party to simply rely upon the sincerity of its leadership, fine words about socialism and the working class, or upon the bitter memory of the Labour Party bureaucracy. (In 1969 even the Labour Party bureaucracy had fine words about socialism.) The only test for any socialist party is what political solutions it offers as the basis for building itself as a mass working class party capable of ending capitalist rule.

A FIGHTING PROGRAMME FOR THE IRISH WORKING CLASS

A programme for action must start from the existing fronts on which workers are fighting against the offensive of capitalism and imperialism. The working class needs a party with a programme of central goals of struggle which is adequate to the sharply felt needs of thousands of workers and their families.

INFLATION AND WAGE RESTRAINT

Immediate withdrawal from the Employer Labour Conference.
No to National Wage Agreements.
Immediate and unconditional return to Free Collective Bargaining.
Active support for all workers breaking the present wage agreement, 12-month rule or 10% wage 'norm'.

The working class must not pay for inflation:-
Lump-sum increases to make up for past wage cuts.
Guaranteed monthly rises equal to the rise in the cost of living.
Committees of housewives and trade-unionists to be formed to work out a genuine working-class cost-of-living index as against the phoney CPI.
A national minimum take-home wage of £50 per week.
Guaranteed full pay for all workers laid off by disputes.
Equal pay now for women.

A wage policy built on these demands lays the basis for uniting all workers and preventing employers opening up divisions between the stronger and weaker groups. While we demand that this policy be adopted at national level by the trade union movement, we must not wait for them to act. They must be fought for at plant and local level by direct action, whatever the position of the trade union or Labour Party leaders.

DEFEND SOCIAL SERVICES

The working class must no longer pay for the employers' crisis with further declining standards in health, welfare, housing and education. The employers and the government must not be allowed to open up divisions in the working class between public and private sector workers:-

Direct action to block the implementation of any cut-backs. No covering for any unfilled vacancies. No trade-union acceptance of deteriorating conditions or increased work-load.

Build local trade-union based committees against the cuts, drawing in public sector workers, women's organisations, trade unionists from manufac-

turing industries, trades councils, Labour Party branches, political groups, etc.
Build a movement that can go beyond protest:- for nationalisation of the banks and finance-houses without compensation; cancellation of the crippling debts of the local authorities to them; restoration of all cuts in social spending;
for a programme of socially useful public works under trade union control to extend and develop the welfare services and provide jobs:- hospitals, nurseries, schools, housing, public transport are all immediate needs; for the nationalisation without compensation of industries which are necessary to the above industries - construction and drugs.

FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT

The Trade Union and Labour Party leaders have for generations stood passively by while employers have created an army of unemployed now reaching 200,000 North and South. The employers have systematically used the threat of the dole queue to discipline those in work. In every fight back by workers, the bosses have set unemployed against employed in the trade union movement.

The fight against redundancy is a fight to veto the right of the management to deploy labour and organise production as they choose.

We must fight for:-
Work or full pay! (Alternative work or full maintenance at take-home rate of pay for all those laid off.)

Cut the hours not the jobs!
For worksharing and an immediate ban on overtime without loss of average earnings.

For a 35-hour week with no loss of pay to force employers to take on new labour. An immediate end to productivity dealing.

Arm the shop-floor against the bosses plans:- direct action to abolish business secrecy; open the books and committees to workers' inspection.

Direct action to stop closures:- occupation of all factories and plants threatening closure, holding them as ransom while demanding nationalisation without compensation

under workers' control.

Trade union organisation of the unemployed:- all unions to register the unemployed, to grant full membership rights. For a trade union campaign among unemployed youth.

A UNITED WORKING CLASS OFFENSIVE

We need policies to close the ranks of the badly divided working class movement. This means fighting for the strongly-organised to support the self-activity of specially oppressed groups of workers.

WOMEN have been traditionally the lowest-paid and worst organised workers in Ireland. The economic crisis hits them hardest as their jobs are often the first to go, and cuts in social services force an increased burden on them.

For woman's right to work:- we must actively oppose the "women out first" position encouraged by the bosses, churches and many trade union officials.

Equal pay now! Full support from rank and file trade unionists for women workers in struggle.

Free contraception and abortion on demand. Divorce at the demand of one partner.

For the complete separation of Church and State and a democratic, free, secular and comprehensive education system.

WORKING CLASS AND NATIONAL QUESTION

The capitalist class in the Republic is the direct ally of British Imperialism in the North, and as such it is a bulwark of the reactionary Northern state and the oppression of the anti-unionist minority within it. In the process of this alliance the ruling class has trampled on democratic rights to stop socialist and republican opposition. This historic and at times barbaric absence of democratic rights is a crippling weakness of the Irish working class. One crucial example is how the Irish army broke the maintenance workers strike without a single protest from any working class organisation.

Therefore, we must, through direct action, and from an independent class position, build a campaign for the defence of democratic rights. We must organise a rank and file

campaign in the trade union and labour movement which can begin to debate the whole question of repression from a class perspective and to act against it.

1. For a labour movement inquiry under rank and file control into police brutality, the conditions of political prisoners and repression.
2. Abolish the Special Criminal Court - make it the centre of struggle against repression.
3. Abolish Section 31 of the Broadcasting act and the Censorship laws; support all open defiance of censorship of news or publication.
4. Direct action in defence of all those arrested, with or without charge, under repressive legislation. Repeal of such legislation; disband the Special Branch.

In order to defend the power of the working class we must not surrender in any way the right to strike:

5. Abolition of the two-tier picket system, and abolition of the Labour Court
6. Direct action to defy all injunctions against strikers.
7. Defend the right to picket against army strike breaking.

Build action committees of the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression.

It is precisely the division of Ireland into two anti-democratic states that maintains the deepest division in the Irish working class. Therefore, our ultimate aim must be to build a united movement of workers, socialists and republicans to break the collaboratory role of the Southern State with British Imperialism, rid the north of the British Army and smash the Northern Ireland state.

PUT THE UNIONS ON A WAR FOOTING

The labour movement must be transformed if we are to defeat the bosses' attacks. We must build working-class organisations which can draw masses of workers into active struggle.

Democratise the Labour movement:- All officials and representatives in the unions and Labour Party to be subject to regular elections and immediate recall and to be paid the average wage of their members.

Build shop-floor organs. In the struggle for workers' veto over employers, shop-floor organisation

campaign in the trade union and labour movement which has begun to debate the whole question of representation

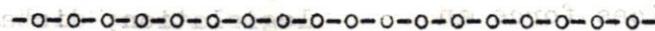
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is vital. Where feasible, we fight for work-place trade union branches with branch meetings in work time; for shop-stewards committees to be represented on trades councils and in local Labour Parties.

We must campaign for a shop-stewards committee in every workplace; and in every industrial combine for effective inter-plant committees; for industrial unions and amalgamations; for democratic lay union conferences with all decisions binding on officials; for a national shop-stewards movement; for a national rank and file movement against the capitalist offensive;

under workers' control. These union organisations of the mass - all unions to be united for a 32-county democratic union movement and an end to the separate Northern Committee.

For all unions, under rank and file control, to unite in a single congress. For closed shops under rank and file control; an end to "sweetheart" deals between union bureaucrats and bosses about unionisation; for trades councils to campaign for complete unionisation of workers. For workers' defence against picket-breaking squads. End two-tier picketing. Direct action to defy injunctions against pickets.



In order to defend the power of the working class we must understand in any way the right to picket

3. Abolition of the two-tier system, and abolition of the Labour Court. Direct action to be taken against all injunctions.

4. Defend the right to picket against any union leadership.

Hold action committees of the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression.

It is precisely the division of Ireland into two states that must be maintained. The workers, our labour working class, therefore, our united struggle must be against a united movement of workers' organisations and representatives to break the collaborative regime of the two states with British labour laws, and the union of the British army and navy, the northern Ireland state.

THE STRuggle FOR A UNITED IRELAND

The workers' movement must be transformed into a mass movement. We must have a working-class organisation that can draw masses of workers into active struggle.

Democratising the labour movement. All officials and representatives in the labour movement must be elected by the workers through elections and

democratic control. The struggle for workers' control over employers' organisations

For women's right to work - we must actively oppose the "women out first" position encouraged by the bosses, organised and self-trade union officials.

Equal pay now! Full support from men and the trade unionists for women workers' struggle. Free contraception and abortion on demand. Divorce at the demand of one partner. For the complete separation of Church and state and a democratic, free, secular and comprehensive education system.

WORKING CLASS AND NATIONAL QUESTION

The capitalist class in the Republic is the directly dominant class - imperialist in the north, and as such it is a universal class nationally. Northern states and the oppression of the anti-imperialist minority within it. In the process of class alliance the working class has transformed the working class as a social and political opposition.

This historic and class democratic alliance of the working class in a struggle for the rights of the Irish working class. The working class is now the only force that can break the imperialist system. It is the only force that can break the imperialist system. It is the only force that can break the imperialist system.

Therefore, we must through direct action, and from a democratic class conference build a campaign for the defence of democratic rights. We must organise a rank and file

REFORMISM - A DEAD END

Despite the failure of capitalism, particularly a decaying Irish capitalism, thousands of workers still retain a political perspective of achieving socialism by peaceful and gradual reform within the system. This problem of reformist political consciousness is the product of the relationship between the mass of Irish workers in trade unions, the trade union leadership, and the Labour Party.

TRADE UNIONS

The Trade Union Movement grew out of and exists for the struggle to improve the wages and conditions of the Irish working class. While at certain times this struggle, e.g. under James Connolly and Jim Larkin, explicitly aimed to end capitalism, the logic of the traditional aims, and they were accentuated by the defeat and death of Connolly, meant in practice an acceptance of the wages system. This is an accommodation in principle to the existence of capitalism. The most clear expression of this is the role of the trade union leadership.

TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY

The leadership of the Irish trade union movement represents the growth of a caste of full-time officials whose central function has been the preservation of the wages system and the working class's role within it. We do not say this because we think the leadership of the ICTU are a corrupt and venal collection of cynics bought out by the bribes of employers and the lust for power. (Undoubtedly there are many who are just that!) We say it because the bureaucracy is the product of the wage contract between labour and capital - a relationship which accepts that it is within capitalism that workers have their existence and must seek merely to better wages and conditions. In order that this relationship be worked efficiently this perspective inevitably leads to professionalisation of the role of negotiators whose task is to achieve the best "share of the cake" for their members. Though no doubt many officials believed that socialism

would some day be achieved, the immediate task of getting the best rate for the job etc. dictated an actual acceptance of the fact of exploitation and capitalism.

It is from this actual acceptance of accommodation to capitalism, which is implicit in the wage contract that the particular features of the bureaucracy can and must be understood. The very structure of the unions - full timers, high salaries, remoteness from the rank and file, non-election, not being subject to easy recall or scrutiny; infrequent or inaccessible branch meetings; the mind- and spirit-numbing obsession with the most trivial rule-making in pursuit of the most narrow aims; - reflects a group who have evolved a separate and distinct interest apart from the rest of the working class upon whom they rest. Their interest is in the preservation of themselves as the broker between labour and capital.

This role, of course, has its most developed and completely fashioned expression in the global perspective of "reformism", that is, that the capitalist state can be won to act in the interest of the working class as a whole through legislation. By extension, therefore, if one has the necessary political apparatus then one can not only fight for better and more widespread legislation in the defence of the working class - working conditions, welfare, education etc. - but also, perhaps, achieve governmental power and thus "legislate" for socialism.

It is precisely this perspective that produces one of the most important and insidious features of reformism: the divorce between "economic" struggles and "political" struggle.

The bureaucracy, therefore, balances between the two major classes in society while resting firmly on the working class. Thus its actions reflect the pressures that exist within the working class movement for it to act. It will vacillate and manoeuvre in the most cynical fashion in order to avoid giving a direct clear lead against capital. However, it will lead, in

certain cases, in such a way as to either divert and contain mass spontaneous upsurge or in order to use the threat of working class pressure to frighten government and employers to retreat thus creating greater freedom of movement. Ultimately, in a crisis, its actions always lead to betrayal. At all costs it must not overthrow the system in which alone it can survive.

LEFT AND RIGHT BUREAUCRATS

Therefore, despite the political difference between the left and right, the bureaucracy all share the same reformist illusions. All of them share the same fear and distrust of independent action of the masses of rank and file workers. All of them share the view that the state is in itself neutral and that parliament is the arena for the political struggle to control the state. All of them accept the split between economic struggles (trade unions) and political struggles (Labour Party).

With such convictions, is it surprising, then, that the bureaucracy whether left or right leads the working-class struggle for 'socialism' to defeat after defeat? Thus, with the same view, the Labour Party participated in a government whose record of anti-democratic legislation is one of the worst in Western Europe - all "in the national interest", of course! The split between economic and political struggles has led to the left bureaucrats opposing in words national wage agreements and social contract but directing opposition to them along purely electoral and parliamentary channels. Likewise, the left trade unionists in the Labour Party, while either abstaining on or voting against repressive laws, have refused to give a direct call to workers for action. This is the essence of the cul-de-sac of reformism. It is the system's major safety valve.

All these features are present deeply within the Irish Trades Union and Labour movement. However, they are a general and abstract statement of reformist and trade union practice. In order to understand the concrete nature of Irish reformist politics a deeper analysis is necessary. Only in this way can genuine political perspectives be outlined in terms of the strategy and tactics needed to overcome one of the major obstacles to the building of a revolutionary party.

REFORMISM IN AN IMPERIALISED COUNTRY

The most important point which differentiates the development of the Irish trade union movement from the British and European experience was the existence of imperialism and national oppression - the 'industrial' North and the 'agricultural' South being its most obvious result. This distortion of the Irish economy, rendering it both dependent and backward meant concretely that no material or objective basis for classical reformism could exist. In other words, unlike England or Germany, because Ireland as a whole was imperialised and not imperialist, there existed no superprofits upon which an ideologically distinct stratum of workers could be developed as a means of controlling the mass of the working class movement. Therefore the Irish trade union movement was forced to either hammer out a completely separate and independent ideology (Marxist), or accept the bourgeois ideology of a particularly degenerate type of workers' party.

In the North the answer was already obvious. The link with Britain was seen as a priority by the trade unions and this maintained their servitude to the most reactionary ideology of the petty-bourgeoisie, namely Orangeism.

In the South the situation was more complicated. Historically the most skilled craft-conscious workers and their leaders eschewed 'politics' completely and identified politically as individuals with the nationalist politics of O'Connell, Parnell, Redmond, and ultimately Sinn Fein. This section of trade unionists at first resolutely opposed the formation of an independent Irish Labour Party. They saw Redmond's Home Rule Party at Westminster as adequate. Though compelled ultimately to submit to the growing strength and pressure of the unskilled workers movement led by Connolly and Larkin, their break with Redmondism was at most partial.

The reasons for this lay with the political failure of Connolly to establish a fully-worked-out revolutionary current within the Irish working class. Though a revolutionary socialist and a Marxist, Connolly was deeply influenced by the

THE IRISH LABOUR PARTY AND TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY

industrial unionism which he had encountered in America under De Leon in the I.W.W. This particular ideological current - syndicalism - is found within certain kinds of rural-based economies from which the working class everges in small-scale production as a raw, dynamic 'apolitical' force.

As a body of ideas and practice the emphasis of syndicalism upon union militancy and the General Strike weapon to overthrow capitalism represents a healthy break with the routine and narrow 'craft' consciousness of the traditional unions. Its singular weakness is on the question of how to destroy the bourgeois state, i.e. the need for a revolutionary party.

Connolly did not ignore the need for a Party. Indeed he had formed three in Ireland. But his conception of it was essentially propagandist - in favour of socialism. Otherwise, how can one explain the presence of Johnston, O'Brien and Cambell in the Irish Socialist Party? All three were advocates of the most cautious trade unionism and evolutionism and were, after Connolly's execution, to disown him and his memory.

Faced with the events of 1914, the failure of the Home Rule strategy and Redmond, the First World War and the growth of Sinn Fein in the South, Connolly needed a different revolutionary programmatic conception of building the Irish Labour Party and the fight for the Constituent Assembly. He certainly realised the need to break Irish labour from the hold of bourgeois ideology. Like Lenin, he saw the 1913 Lock Out and the foundation of the Citizen Army as the beginning of this. However, the crucial gap between economic and political struggles which lay at the centre of both his syndicalist beliefs and the traditional craft-dominated unions, paved the way for the ultimate obliteration of the meaning of Connolly's supreme act of political insight and courage. Connolly's action in the 1916 Rising attempted to lay the basis for the direct leadership of the national struggle by the working class as the key to a fight for a Workers' Republic. Simultaneously it was striking a major blow against British and world imperialism.

The Labour Party and trade union leadership, in disowning Connolly and the meaning of 1916 for a revolutionary fight against British Imperialism and Irish Capitalism, signalled their total capitulation to the interests of capital over labour, the classic function of reformism. But the path from capitulation to the war in 1914 to abstention from the 1918 Dail elections and to 'loyal' henchmen of the Partitionist parliament in 1922 not only led to the 'carnival of reaction' predicted by Connolly, but it also effectively destroyed the possibility of the Irish Labour Party developing as a mass party of the Irish working class. The Party lost the support of the large mass of the Irish working class, North and South, in the North to Loyalism and in the South, among large sections of workers, to the Republican tradition of bourgeois parties like Fianna Fail. Thus, reformism in Ireland was defined and limited by the National Question - the Partition of Ireland in the interests of Imperialism.

The Labour Party has never since fulfilled for the Irish bourgeoisie the role of a traditional social democratic party, just as in the North, the weak and ridiculous Northern Ireland Labour Party has never been needed as a major safety valve by the Stormont regime. But if the "political wing" of reformism in Ireland has played no significant role, then its other wing, the economic and ideological role of the Trade Union Bureaucracy, has been vastly more important in doing just that.

The L.P. bureaucracy in the South played a direct role in the Dail of 1922. Its reformist perspective of state control was developed and defined in conditions where a tiny backward neo-colonial petty bourgeois state, attempting to overcome the crippling limits of its relations with imperialism, was forced both to centralise and rationalise key sectors of the state and industry at the same time as it crushed politically and militarily all those who wanted to take the fight against imperialism and capitalism further.

The Trade Union Bureaucracy was the

willing accomplice of a Bonapartist regime in all of this. It is this role historically which has swollen its power and influence on behalf of the Irish capitalist states North and South. It is this role which accounts for the enormous bureaucratic centralisation that characterises its organisation and for the corresponding weakness of the Irish working class movement. The Irish Labour Party represents a small but still crucial dimension ideologically for the bureaucracy in relation to a section of Irish trade unionists and the working class. But, as the last period since 1969 has shown so clearly, the Party and the Trade Union bureaucracy face almost no opposition when they have once again taken the road of coalition and anti-working class policies.

We therefore fundamentally disagree with the LWR and with the Militant Group who characterise the Labour Party as a mass party of the working class because of the formal links with the Trade Union movement. This formalism ignores concrete history. The Labour Party represents under the conditions of imperial economic and financial control of Ireland, a deformed workers party ideologically permeated by petty bourgeois ideas directly in the service of the Trade Union bureaucracy. We reject totally the LWR perspective of an all-Ireland Labour Party and the Constituent Assembly as the key transitional demands for the Irish socialist revolution. The LWR formulations are both without content and abstract. In the November issue of Workers Republic (no. 66) the slightest attempt to give substance to the form leads to the fantastic position that an all-Ireland Labour Party if led by revolutionaries can win the masses to it and thus dislocate all sections of the labour apparatus" (our emphasis). No mention is made of what programme revolutionaries might apply to achieve such a fantastic feat, winning the Irish working class to their side in an all-Ireland Labour Party, nor, more revealingly, of what they might do with this movement having won it to their side. Surely LWR can conceive of a mass revolutionary working class party doing more than "dislocating" the Labour apparatus of capitalist society? The truth is that as soon as this bubble of LWR phantasy touches reality anywhere it dissolves immediately into blatant opportunism leading it in the South to

accommodate to the Left trade union bureaucracy and left reformism in the Labour Party, and in the North to accommodate to loyalism in the shape of the perspective of the Labour and Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee. It is this perspective which explains LWR's passivity on real concrete questions whether in TUCAR or in the former Dublin Shop Stewards Committee.

Furthermore, we believe that the demand for the Constituent Assembly, correct before Partition and the establishment of two bourgeois states, is completely utopian. As elsewhere, LWR are too ready to follow the letter of Trotsky rather than his method - in this case the Permanent Revolution in which the slogan for the Constituent Assembly represents the working class and oppressed nationalities' need for the widest possible democratic freedoms to fully express and fight for their programmes. Its context for Trotsky, as for Lenin was the denial of democratic rights either by feudal or colonial regimes and thus it is in these situations that the real dynamic and revolutionary potential of the slogan can be seen, Russia 1917, Ireland in the same period, Portugal or Spain in the present. Ireland to-day represents a completely different situation. We have two deformed bourgeois states. In one, three bourgeois parties have collaborated to exploit "democratically" the Irish working class, using the 'assembly' to do so. LWR's abstract fetishistic use of the slogan in reality means offering these three bourgeois parties another 32-County forum to 'prove' their commitment to bourgeois democracy.

LEFT REFORMISM IN FULL FLIGHT

In 1975 the Left Alternative propaganda alliance of Sinn Fein (Workers Party), "Communist" Party and the Labour Party "Liaison of the Left" drew large audiences for a programme of nationalisation of mineral wealth, oil, gas etc. as the basis for ending unemployment in Ireland. They seized on mineral exploitation as not merely an important instance of imperialism in Ireland but as the principal feature of it. Not content with ignoring the presence of the British Army they diverted workers' attention away from concrete mass action now against closures and unemployment, even in their trade union support groups, by offering them purely governmental reformist slogans with illusory appeal.

Furthermore, the resources campaign is a pure example of demanding state capitalism in the name of socialism. No mention is permitted of expropriation without compensation. No mention is permitted of nationalisation under workers' control. They offer a governmental programme for natural resources management by a capitalist state. The mass of workers for whom this picture of wealth has huge appeal are in no way mobilised. They are used as a sounding board to orchestrate the puny voices of left reformists who opportunistically believe they can gain electoral strength through championing abstract nationalisations.

Fortuitous though these mineral discoveries, and despite the imminence of their loss to the "economy", such opportunism is not excused. The task of revolutionary socialists is to fight for the leadership of the struggle to nationalise resources through mobilising the labour movement around demands which clarify the nature of the state, the betrayal involved in compensation and the necessity of fighting for workers' control.

TACKLING REFORMISM

It is therefore necessary, we believe, to develop a political strategy which effectively combats the ideological grip the various features of reformism have upon significant sections of workers. It is clearly useless to simply abuse the trade union bureaucrats and Labour Party or Left Alternative as 'traitors', in the fashion of SWM. As pointed out already, the sell-outs and betrayals are the product of the role and perspective generated by the existence and specific interest of the Trade Union bureaucracy and their relation to the Labour Party. We believe the hold of these ideas, essentially a set of beliefs about how to achieve a better life, are widespread among large numbers of workers whether or not they give allegiance to the Labour Party or the Left Alternative groups.

The strategy should include the following.

1. Fighting for full democracy in the trade union movement to bring it

under the control of the rank and file movement as an indispensable part of destroying the bureaucratic hold and direction of the trade union leaders: election of all officials and easy recallability; freedom of circulation of views and of political expression; average salary for officials; workplace and open voting; special provisions to make meetings accessible to working women; frequent meetings of branches; an end to secrecy from workers of union negotiations; an end to two-tier picketing; freedom of local sections and branches to affiliate to local organs of the broad labour movement, including trades councils, and to issue public statements.

2. Putting forward a programme of reforms and methods of fighting for equal pay, against public welfare cuts, and for the defence of living standards etc., which can lead the working class to particular victories increasingly under revolutionary leadership.

3. Placing central to our agitation and propaganda those demands which serve as a bridge between the day-to-day struggles and socialist ideas, in particular, demands which organisationally and politically carry the class forward to revolutionary ideas. (These demands must flow from our programme. In effect they are transitional demands.)

4. Consistent propaganda work on the role of the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy with a view to exposing to workers the political assumptions of reformism - the 'neutrality' of the state, the 'peaceful road to socialism, the separation of economic and political issues as reflected by the bureaucracy and the Labour Party, the "mixed economy" etc.

5. Where possible, the building of joint action committees with sections of trade unionists, Labour Party branches, Trades Councils, socialist and republican groups, women's organisations, community and student groups on the major issues threatening the interests and existence of the labour movement - repressive legislation, unemployment, inflation, equal pay, public welfare cuts etc. On these issues the broadest strata of the labour movement must be

brought into the struggle in marches, meetings, pickets etc. Only this perspective offers the possibility of a serious challenge to the bureaucrats and the Labour Party.

As the recent experiences of Chile and Portugal disastrously illustrate, no "revolutionary movement" without a strategy to overcome reformism will succeed in breaking the hold of the Labour Party or Left-Alternative-type groups on the Irish working class, no matter what courage and militancy the class displays in its spontaneous mass struggles. Nothing could more sharply illustrate this than the fact that those centrist groupings in Ireland and Britain (e.g. SWM and SWP) who, trailing behind the massive spontaneous and creative upsurges of the Portuguese workers, claimed that the disease of reformism was completely cured there, have had to bitterly eat their words before recent events in Portugal. The problem of reformism and the method of solving it is not just one issue in a revolutionary perspective among others. The whole perspective is crystallised and summarised in the strategy to defeat reformism. Any perspective for bringing the workers to power stands or falls on this issue.

DEMANDS ON THE LABOUR PARTY

It is true that the issue of who forms the government is vitally important. Workers who say so are right. The bosses will increasingly want to use the government, law, police and army to crush trade unionists' activities and drive down our living standards, to crush the forces that have borne the brunt of the national struggle and intensify collaboration with Loyalism and British Imperialism. The working class vitally needs a government which will act in its interests in resisting these attacks. To those who are in or are sympathetic to the Labour Party or Left Alternative groups, who believe that the Labour Party and its leadership can at least be pressurised into this path, we propose a fight for the broadest joint action from above and below, leading to a united front to defend jobs, wages social services etc.

It is in this context that demands on the Labour Party must be seen and understood. They express immediate actions and aims which the working

class need to take up to help it meet the crisis. We say to those who have faith in the possibilities of the Labour Party: "Put your party and its leadership locally and nationally to the test in struggle for workers' needs. Together we can build a movement which, if your predictions are correct, can force the Labour Party to commit itself to the struggle, but which if it cannot, as we believe, can be the basis of the working class going forward". This would, of course, involve bringing down the Labour Party in whatever government or coalition it is in, not calling impotently for it to withdraw from coalitions, which is all that the left groups were doing.

More importantly, it would be bringing down the Labour Party through forcing its politicians to the test before the masses of mobilised workers. Those who place a higher value on the independent fighting spirit of the class than on keeping a Labour Party in power would thus be involved in mobilising the whole class for a workers' government which would really be a regime transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat (a Workers' State). The arguments against allowing Fianna Fail back into power would not be irrefutable for L.P. supporters, as they are now in the context of only having the Tweedledum-Tweedledee choice of the Coalition or Fianna Fail. Instead, a clearly comprehensible path to the achievement of a workers' Government would be mapped out.

THE WORKERS' AND SMALL FARMERS' GOVERNMENT

The tactic and slogan for a workers' Government is integral to the whole method and context of the Transitional Programme. (In Ireland where there exists a substantial and oppressed layer of small farmers the slogan must include them also, either through winning their support for workers' parties or through a united front with their own organisations.) Outside the context of a Transitional Programme however the tactic becomes either reformist or utopian. It represents at the level of Government a particular form of the United Front. It was conceived by the leaders of the Third International as a fighting slogan which would cap the whole series of

interconnected demands - immediate, partial and transitional - which if fought for successfully would bring whole sections of the class into the deepest conflict with the very basic operations of the capitalist system itself; conflict, that is with the state machine. In this way the hold of reformism would be broken.

The slogan provides an answer to the question of what kind of government do the workers and oppressed need to manage society in their interest and not at their expense. Thus it brings the working class to the sharpest point of conflict with the state machine. It simultaneously provides the basis for preparing an armed offensive against it. It is, therefore, transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat - the Workers' State. The context of the demand is a struggle in which revolutionaries fight to lead, defend and arm organisations of workers as organs of struggle against the state and as the organs of government of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In both Chile and Portugal this tactic was vitally necessary as a perspective in the propaganda of revolutionaries operating in a context of massive advances by workers and peasants. In both cases it was disastrous to either ignore the large reformist parties or to trail behind workers' illusions in Popular Unity or the idea of a Socialist-Communist coalition for its own sake. The task of revolutionaries was to fight in the local organisations of workers for a United Front of all workers' parties and unions around clearly stated demands calculated to advance and defend and arm the workers' movement. In both situations the question of government was crucial. Tactically, therefore, in agitating for the united front on a programme of reforms and transitional demands it was essential to meet the question of Government with the perspective of the Workers Government as the extension of that united front. Only around a united front programme could the revolutionary groups possibly agitate for their perspectives or defend the gains of the class. In the context where that programme would be successfully taken up by the class in a pre-revolutionary situation of workers' councils, the

revolutionaries would be in a position to actually call for all workers' parties to take governmental power from the bourgeois parties, if this were still necessary.

To-day in Ireland there is not such a situation, but when transitional demands are raised in the class to mobilise it for inflation-proof wages, for nationalisation under their control to prevent lay-offs, or for a united front against repression and British troops, these demands could become merely reformist or republican bargaining positions unless socialists raise sharply the political implications of organising independently for them. That is, socialists must raise the question of the state and of a workers' government to defend them from the apparatus of the capitalist state and to voice their demands. In this sense the workers' Government is the central link in the chain of transitional demands. It is not inevitable that the revolution must be achieved only by passing through the stage of a Workers' Government, but the slogan is an essential one in tackling reformism as an obstacle on the road to the Workers' State.

Therefore, in relation to the Labour Party, we say to militants that as revolutionary socialists we do not believe that the L.P. will fight to defend the interests of our class, we are prepared to fight alongside those who still do for a programme of demands which if put into action would meet the immediate needs of the class as a whole.

We believe that this programme at the level of government would include the following.

1. No coalition with any conservative anti-working class party - Fine Gael or Fianna Fail.
2. Workers must not pay for the crisis of capitalism. Workers' parties must abandon all attempts at controlling wages. No incomes policy. No national wage agreements. Abolish the Labour Court and two-tier picketing.
3. Workers must not pay for inflation. A Workers' Government must enforce
 - a. a legal minimum wage of £50 per week (Jan '77 prices).
 - b. fixed-sum increases in wages to compensate for every 1% rise in the cost of living of workers and their families.

18. c. immediate equal pay for women.
4. Workers must not suffer unemployment. A Workers' Government must nationalise without compensation all firms declaring redundancies and recognise workers' control of them. They must introduce a legal 35-hour week with no loss of average earnings. They must make it legally obligatory for all employers who cannot find work for their employees to pay them full rates, and must introduce a plan of useful public works, hospitals, clinics, schools, nurseries, in which all surplus labour could be employed.
 5. A Workers' Government must tackle the real cause of the economic crisis.
 - a. it must abolish business secrets and open the records of all companies to workers' inspection.
 - b. it must nationalise the big banks and finance houses, centralise them in one state bank and subordinate them to workers' and employees committees of control.
 - c. it must cancel the ruinous interest payments of local authorities which affect both workers, small farmers and lower middle classes through declining social services, amenities, housing and rising taxes.
 - d. it must nationalise under workers' control the major industries and trade monopolies.
 6. It must call for the immediate withdrawal of the British Army from the North and the disbandment of the Ulster Defence Regiment; call for the ending of all repressive legislation and the disarming of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the North. It must call for the release of all republican political prisoners in the North and in Britain.

It must end all repressive laws in the South, abolish the Special Criminal Court and release all political prisoners. It must call for support for the minority population in the North from the Trade Union Movement in the South, encouraging joint trade union activity in Ireland and in Britain on as wide a scale as possible to achieve the above ends.

It must end all collaboration between the Irish Army, police or other state forces with the forces of British Imperialism. It must abolish the Special Branch. It must establish the legal rights of members of the police

and army to form unions and to join political organisations, have free access to their press and the right to attend meetings.

7. A Workers' Government must support the right of workers to defend themselves by forming armed defence committees against attacks by fascists and employers on strikers, pickets, demonstrations and meetings.
8. A Workers' Government must immediately provide the legal and financial basis for a fully comprehensive and free General Medical Service making available to women abortion and contraception on demand, and a 24-hour nursery service. It must immediately establish the right to divorce and extend it to become free, accessible to all and automatic at the request of one partner. It must introduce a basis for equal opportunity for women not only by the above actions but also by reforms in education and training.
9. A Workers' Government must introduce a totally secular, comprehensive educational system and abolish all state support for fee-paying or private institutions. It must abolish the class-biased divisions in the higher education system and make it accessible to the working class. It must guarantee full wages to apprentices and fully paid leave for them in institutions of education as opposed to factory-style training units. Extend the school-leaving age to 16 and provide adequate grants to cover full maintenance in further education for all at living-away-from-home rates tied to the cost of living, irrespective of parental means. Extend the provision of schools and teachers.
10. A Workers' Government must end EEC Intervention stockpiling immediately. It must end Slaughter premiums. End all interest payments due from small farmers and provide adequate free credit.
11. A Workers' Government must engage in active solidarity with all struggles of workers abroad and all struggles for national liberation. It must fight for a revolutionary international of workers' parties on a revolutionary programme for the world crisis of capitalism.

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Concluded.

LESSONS OF CHILE

19.

In the speech made by Noel Browne at the first conference of the new Independent Labour group, he was forced by the growing crisis of reformism on a world scale, shown most savagely in the disastrous failure of the Chilean Road, to sharply attack the parliamentary road to workers' power and brand it as a cul-de-sac for the working class. We welcome the remark. Insofar as it opens up the prospect of raising debate on "Reform or Revolution" concretely and sharply in terms of the kind of policies required by this new party, we welcome it. But in Browne himself we see an incurable dyed-in-the-wool left reformist and opportunist. His claim to have used the Dail and Senate as platforms for the class education and mobilisation of workers is, at best, self-delusion. His record of not issuing a single call to action to the rank and file of the Labour Party and trade unions against the Emergency Powers ought to be sufficient for those who lack a longer memory.

His behaviour at the Annual Conference of Labour in Limerick was hardly that of a Karl Liebknecht. He was willing to trade acceptance of Coalition, with a few conditions, for acceptance back into the fold of official standing in the Dail elections.

The following article shows up some of the main steps in the cul-de-sac Chilean road to "socialism". It proves that Reformism in the form of Social Democracy (the Chilean Socialist Party), or Stalinism, has lost none of the power it displayed in the twenties and thirties to lead the working class into the concentration camps and torture chambers once again in our time.

It is a contribution to the debate on the lessons of Chile and the Parliamentary Road, the lessons of Centrism and Reformism, which must become a key part of the process of clarifying the basis for a socialist programme in the arena of the new Party.

OUTLINE

In October 1970 the Popular Unity Government (UP), a governmental Popular Front, took over executive power in Chile. This Front was a coalition of members of the Socialist Party (SP), the Communist Party (CP), the Radical Party (once the leading bosses' party but outpaced by 1970 by the Christian Democrats) and the MAPU (Movement for Unitary Popular Action), API and CL. In spite of all the hullabaloo about the newness of the experiment and the exciting untried Chilean Road, this was just a class-collaborationist popular front government of which there were already precedents in Chile in the popular front government of 1936-42 and the alliance of 1956 (FRAP).

All these "experiments" proved cul-de-sacs for the working class but gave the kiss of life to the crisis-stricken bosses' parties. The experiment of 1970-73 proved a death-trap, ending in

reign of terror by the capitalists and their army that has left tens of thousands dead, scores of thousands subjected to unspeakable tortures and thousands disappeared without trace.

Contrary to the claims made by the leadership of the CP and SP and their supporters outside Chile, claims which the "Movement of the Revolutionary Left" (MIR) despite its ultra-left boycott of the 1970 elections, helped to bolster in a crucial way, this government was in no sense a workers' government. In its composition, as well as including two mass reformist parties, the CP and the SP, it included a number of loose centrist groupings chief of which was MAPU (Garretton). But more importantly it included the capitalist Radical Party, just as the Union of the Left in France is to include Farbes' Radical Party, an explicitly bosses' party. This inclu-

sion was of great importance. In spite of the fact that the Christian Democrats were the main bosses' party, the direct existence of this capitalist bridgehead in the UP Government gave a focus to the basic orientation of the leadership of the CP and SP. They wanted every measure they took to be tested first of all for its acceptability to the Chilean bourgeoisie. The radical Party was their pocket compass in this class-collaborationist manoeuvre.

The UP Government represented only the control over the Governmental Executive. At the same time the legislature was in the control of openly capitalist parties led by the Christian Democracy. In addition, the UP had come to power only after the CD had extorted, under pressure from the US-led international bourgeoisie, concessions that became known as the "constitutional accords". Among these were promises

- (i) not to reduce the strength of the armed forces and not to interfere by vetoing any officer-appointment approved by the military's own training academies, monitored in turn by the US military top brass;
- (ii) that it would be illegal to form armed militias of any kind independent of the regular army. In this context Allende swore "There will be no armed forces here other than those stipulated in the constitution. That is to say, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. I shall eliminate any others if they appear".

He kept his promise - eliminating himself, his government and the revolutionary potential of the working class in the process. Though these accords were conceded in 1970 as part of the parliamentary-cretinist design of the UP to prove to the capitalists that they would muzzle the working class and thereby get the CD votes to capture office, they were later used by the SP and CP leaders, under massive pressure from the Chilean and foreign bourgeoisie to block the struggle of the workers and peasants to arm themselves. They were also used to excuse their support for the treacherous arms control law of Autumn 1972. This law, enacted in the National assembly in October with the

help of CP and SP deputies, gave the army a carte blanche to arrest, to search for arms and seize them anywhere without warrant. This was done in a context where the workers committees (Cordones Industriales) had begun to arm and where the building workers of Santiago had set up an unofficial workers militia. The Law was similar to the powers conferred on the Southern Irish Army under the Criminal Law Bill of 1976 and the Emergency Powers.

In these disgusting class-collaborationist accords, trade for the votes of Christian Democrats, the blotch of gangrene is discernible which by summer 1973 had affected the UP government to such a degree that even the dress rehearsal coup of June 1973 was registered by it as yet another proof that the armed forces were "irrevocably and essentially professionals and democrats".

In the three years of the UP a number of events stand out that point out with startling clarity universal lessons for workers and toilers everywhere. All this brief article on the fourth anniversary of the coup can do is to pick out a few of these events in the hope that others not dealt with here can be discussed in open and principled debate by the Irish left, including the Chileans in Ireland, who assert the need for a principled regroupment built on programmatic agreement, conceived and fought for as part of building a new revolutionary international in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky.

(30) CONTRADICTION

As expected, the UP Government because it contained the two main mass reformist working class parties, called forth a big upsurge in the expectations and militancy of workers and peasants. They rightly began to rise up in an attempt to make the UP government an executive organ of their own class interests. This forced the contradiction at the heart of all reformist and centrist working class based parties between what their working class supporters expect of them in terms of class measures and what the bourgeoisie expects of them in terms of luring the working class to participate in their own exploitation and in blocking the most crucial class measures the workers try to win, chief of which is arming themselves.

The UP government reacted to this upsurge by contradictory measures which at one and the same time tried to keep the Chilean bosses sweet and tried to make concessions to the workers sufficient to dampen their mass pressure. In the first year of office, prices of basic commodities were frozen and food imports, which prior to 1971 never topped 170 million dollars leaped to 250 million. Foreign borrowing and the using up of external reserves were part of these measures adding to the massive foreign debt the CD Frei government had handed on to the UP. The perspective in the "honeymoon" year of illusion was not to prepare workers and peasants for power but to manoeuvre in a centrist balancing act between the classes so that the 1973 congressional elections should endorse those of 1970. Workers and peasants were kept in the dark though the howls of the wolf of capitalist world finance, the I.M.F., could already be heard crying for its blood: capital, interest and cut-backs or else...

NATIONALISATION

The same pressure of the masses, taking the UP at its face value, forced the nationalisation of the copper mines of the US corporations, Anaconda and Kennicott in summer '71. The Peruvian formula was used - profits extracted over the years were assessed and if they were less than the market price of the mines this would be paid; if more, then the mines owed money to Chile. The reaction of Imperialism, led by its world policeman, the USA, is an object lesson for workers everywhere on the nature of their worst enemy, capitalism as a world system, and on the burning need for a new revolutionary International Party.

The banks were nationalised at the same time - with compensation and without workers' control. This reformist nationalisation of the banks (the form of nationalisation so much trumpeted by Sinn Fein ('Workers' Party!)) only displaced the problem, accentuating foreign indebtedness and by denying workers' inspection and active veto on management decisions, dampened the revolutionary upsurge of workers all around Chile.

The strike-back of the international bourgeoisie was immediate and furious. Finance requested by the UP to purchase three commercial aircraft was refused by the Inter American Investment Bank. A freeze on spare parts for copper mining machinery was imposed from the USA, putting pressure on one of the lynch-pins of the Chilean economy. An attempt was made by the USA bosses to embargo the proceeds of the sale of copper in Europe. This had its intended effects in frightening European banks out of giving credit to Chile, thus exposing the false manoeuvrist hope of the UP that they could play off the European and US bourgeoisies behind the backs of the workers. At the same time short-term credit was cut from 220m dollars to 20m dollars in one swoop.

The effects of this economic sabotage by international finance capital, aided and abetted by the Chilean bosses, soon hit home. By Dec. '71 the Escudo had to be devalued, contrary to the election promises of the UP to workers and peasants. At the same time capitalistic multiple exchange rates were introduced. A real workers government would have imposed direct control, accountable to the mass organs of the workers, over foreign trade and exchange, with rationing under workers control and inspection as part of a plan to mobilise workers and peasants on a war footing.

In this context, the international terms of trade, as intended by the bosses' plan of economic sabotage, worsened drastically. In 1969 a ton of copper was equal to 2.61 tonnes of beef; by Nov. 71 it equalled only 1.01 tonnes. By November '71, therefore, debt services had become an acute problem for the government. The UP owed 2 billion dollars foreign debts from the previous government while 642million dollars was owed by the copper companies to foreign finance institutions. The UP agreed to pay interest on all debts incurred before it took over. Despite this reformist capitulation, the credit crisis was so acute that Allende had to announce the suspension of payments due in the '71-'73 period. Negotiations on this opened up in spring '72. Under enormous pressure from the international bourgeoisie and unwilling to mobilise the labouring masses on a revolutionary war-

footing, the UP was forced to promise adequate compensation for the nationalised copper corporations and to submit semi-annual balance-of-payments reports to the IMF. The international and native bourgeoisie, through the IMF, conceded a moratorium on debt-servicing till the end of '72 on condition that new realistic negotiations opened up then. In this way the bourgeoisie hoped to step up its economic sabotage to coincide with the spring congressional elections.

USSR AND CHINA

It is instructive to pinpoint the role of the USSR and China in this context. China and Rumania sent small loans, but since the '73 coup China has poured 2 billion pounds into Chile! (Petit-bourgeois defenders of China whether of the CPI-ML or the RS variety must be forced to confront this fact in every public arena in which Chile is debated.) The USSR on the other hand put pressure on the UP to mend its fences with the IMF so that as a condition of getting Russian aid, the credit lines of the World Bank and the Inter American bank should be reopened by the UP. Thus, the USSR made this capitulation a precondition of credit and aid. So much for the proletarian internationalism one can expect from the USSR bureaucracy.

Inevitably, during the second half of '72 the latent crisis, "postponed" momentarily at the top by the moratorium on payments, broke out at the bottom. Lack of foreign exchange and credit caused huge shortages. These in turn led to hoarding, black markets and raging inflation of 160%. The reaction was twofold. On the part of the working class the food shortages and inflation forced the construction of committees striving to monitor and control supplies, especially of food, and prices. These committees became known as GAPS. The workers, through the GAPS, strove heroically to expose and smash up hoarding networks, to take over stockpiles and to begin to establish workers control over the distribution and circulation of basic goods. The UP government, through the CP and Millas the CP economics minister, fought to keep control in the hands of merchants and shopkeepers and did everything to resist the GAPS mass pressure for requisitioning,

distribution and rationing accountable to the toilers at rank and file level. When eventually the pressure of the GAPS could no longer be diverted by the UP and they had to concede measures of rationing and distribution under workers' control, they were hit back at by the bourgeois 'march of the empty saucepans' - the first major street mobilisation fronted by merchants and bourgeois housewives aided behind the scenes by the USA. The limited success of this mobilisation whetted the appetite of the Chilean bourgeoisie and its US underwriters for deeper economic sabotage.

The next move was the lorry owners' strike, led by lorry owners and merchants, financed by the native and US bourgeoisie and supported by the openly fascist Fatherland and Freedom. The workers responded to this strike by requisitioning lorries forcefully and driving them themselves. When most shopkeepers closed down the workers organised defence of those who stayed open, others were requisitioned and thus they dictated a regime that entailed that all toilers be fed. The organs through which these tasks were grasped and executed were workers committees, proto-soviets called Cordones Industriales. When the workers attempted to crush the fascist band of Fatherland and Freedom by direct mass action on the streets, the UP, fearing like the plague the elementary moves towards working class dictatorship represented by this, stressed the sole rights of the police and army to handle F and F. This strengthened the army and police, heightened the illusions of the labouring people in them and thereby diffused the struggle of the workers and peasants to arm themselves in the heat of battle. They refused to give any lead to the workers, who wanted to smash the economic sabotage of the lorry owners by forcing the nationalisation under workers control of the entire transport industry.

The reason for this was the parliamentary-cretinous 'Chilean Road' perspective of the UP which implied a search for the broadest possible alliance of workers with native anti-monopoly capitalists and petit bourgeois forces.

FATAL CONCESSIONS

Due to the strong emergence of the Cordones Industriales and their direct mobilising action, the lorry-owners' strike was defeated materially and physically. But the bourgeoisie, spearheaded by the Christian Democracy, cashed in on their knowledge of the desperate desire of the CP and SP leadership to appease the bourgeoisie for the congressional election and used the calling off of the strike to extort basic political concessions. They appeared, of course, to be making the concessions themselves since they were helping with the return to 'normal'.

The first of these was the Arms Control Law. The germ of this law enacted in Oct. '72 with CP and SP support, was already contained in the constitutional accords of 1970. It openly gave the army the legal basis for nipping in the bud the rudimentary moves by workers to arm themselves. The CP and SP leaders showed themselves counter-revolutionary in this, though in the absence of a revolutionary party, the toiling masses trusted them to lead them forward. The second concession was the bringing of representatives of the army directly into the government. The CP's paper El Siglo, of Nov. 2nd '72, the date of the announcement of the Generals' entry into the Government, devoted its editorial to general Pratts "who has reaffirmed the ideas of the schneider doctrine". The editorial ended:

"the Chilean people are right to place total confidence in the armed forces of the fatherland and in the strictly professional conduct for which they are distinguished".

Right-wing SP forces led by Allende were of course architects of this incorporation of the army generals but the position of the left wing of the SP, led by Altimirano can be gauged by the following statement of his concerning the entry of the generals:

"The incorporation of the uniformed services into Companero Allende's Cabinet means that the entire Chilean people remain united against the reactionaries".

The centrist MIR, ostensibly to the left of Popular Unity and masquerading as a revolutionary party had the following to say in its journal "Punto Final" in Nov. '72.

"The armed forces have a true patriotic and democratic role to play alongside the people, supporting the workers in their struggle against the exploitation of the bourgeoisie. ... in building a new state, a new society, the armed forces can really play a great role, protecting the workers and the security of the country".

Both the reformist CP and the centrist MIR falsely lay claim to Leninist politics and methods. To refute this, compare the above positions to the following from Lenin's "State and Revolution".

"As a matter of fact the exact opposite is the case. Marx's idea is that the working class must break up, smash the ready made State machinery and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

"On April 12th 1871, i.e. just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann 'If you look up the last chapter of my Eighteenth Brumaire you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another but to smash it (Marx's emphasis:- the original is Zerschlagen) and this is the precondition for every real peoples revolution on the continent. And this is what our heroic party comrades in Paris are attempting'. The words 'to smash the bureaucratic military machine' briefly express the principal lesson in Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. It is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing Kautskyite 'interpretation' of Marxism".

(Selected Works p. 313).

Lenin might well be commenting on the positions of the reformist CP, SP and the centrist MIR.

THE MILLAS PLAN

The stockpiling, hoarding and black-marketing which was part of the organised sabotage of the Chilean and foreign bourgeoisie called forth measures of requisitioning and direct seizure of distribution networks by the workers. This was led by the GAPS and Cordones. Similarly, the lorry-owners strike forced the workers to take direct control of more and more sectors of industry. But these direct actions of the workers were a headache for the CP and SP leaders' policy of appeasing the bosses and their main party, the Christian Democrats, coming up to the congressional elections. The aim of the Millas plan (the CP economics minister) was to cure this headache by handing back the factories seized in autumn 1972, much as the Negrin government had done in Spain 35 years previously. The aim was also similar: to renew the class alliance with the bourgeoisie, to sweeten the moderate wing of the CD for the elections and show the international bourgeoisie that they need not fear, that no workers revolution was being planned by the Popular Unity. The response of the working class to this treachery of the CP minister and the UP government was swift and massive. The workers in the cordones, spearheaded by the Cerillos Maipo Cordon mobilised an enormous solidarity movement in the industrial suburbs of the capital. This movement threw up barricades, blocking off the route to the seized enterprises. They demanded the dropping of Millas' plan and firm guarantees from the UP that none of the seized factories would be returned to the capitalists. The SP general secretary under enormous pressure from its left wing hastened to support the rank and file resistance.

The resistance grew so as to drag in CP militants who worked in the seized enterprises. It forced the SP, MIR and MAPU into a united front against the handbacks. At this point a crucial chance was lost, due to the absence of a revolutionary party with a hearing in the vanguard of the class, to force the CP into the United front and thus into the fight for a Workers Government committed by the workers and peasants to a number of

key measures aimed at preparing the class for power. The chance to fight for such a government was at hand in the March elections. Such a struggle would have faced the CP with the alternatives of either ganging up with the CD or going along, however reluctantly to mobilise support for a workers government. Alliance with CD, given the nature of the mobilisation, would have been extremely difficult for the CP. A situation where a Workers Government of revolutionaries, CP-ers, SP-ers, MIRistas and trade union representatives would be elected accountable to the mass organs of the labouring people for implementing the needed key measures would provoke immediate and violent reaction from the bourgeoisie. The necessary measures would have included: - break with the bourgeoisie; - army out of government; - Radical Party out of government; - abolish arms control laws; - end constitutional accords; - arm workers and peasants; - nationalisation without compensation and under workers control of all firms native and foreign of a certain size; - distribution of latifundia to the peasants; - full political and trade union rights for soldiers, sailors and airmen; - control over foreign trade and exchange.

Only the most proletarian and democratic organs - soviets - could in such circumstances be the basis for the mobilisation of workers and peasants and through them of soldiers, for the only adequate solution: the violent seizure of power and the shattering of the bosses' state by mass insurrection.

LAST RESORT

Rather than face the above perspective the UP withdrew the Millas plan to stave off even deeper mobilisation. The depth of mobilisation which forced this was shown further in the results of the congressional elections of March '73. Workers in industry and mines, poor inhabitants of the shanty towns, Mapuche peasants in the south, all flocked enthusiastically to the election meetings and gave an unexpected mass support to the UP candidates who on March 4th

obtained 44% of the votes. The bourgeoisie had failed to get the two-thirds necessary to impeach and constitutionally neutralise Allende. The bourgeoisie thus had proof that constitutional methods could no longer contain the class conflict that was putting a dagger to the heart of capitalism. Henceforth the centre-piece of their strategy would be the preparation of a coup, in which the ultimate defence of the bosses' rule, its bodies of armed men, would be mobilised to crush back and drown in blood the rising of workers and peasants.

ARMY DRESS REHEARSAL

But as yet the bourgeoisie, Chilean and international, had not tested out the class forces fully. Especially, it had not yet fully proved to itself that the UP leaders could be relied upon to surrender the workers and peasants into the concentration camps. It gained priceless proofs of the totally gangrenous impotence of the UP leaders during the six months between the March elections and the coup. One event especially gave all the evidence needed. that the time to end the 'Chilean Road' had arrived. This was the dress rehearsal coup of June 29, 1973.

On that morning at 8.40 am tanks of the Chilean army's second armoured regiment poured onto the streets and made for the presidential office building. The rebel regiment fired on the Moneda Palace, Allende's residence, for three hours before surrendering to the Commander in Chief Carlos Pratts.

Contrary to the anti-Marxist myth peddled by the Chilean CP, SP and MIR, and their supporters, about the "neutrality" and the "independent" professional status of the Chilean army and its role 'in support of' the labouring people, it had a record of use against the Chilean workers and peasants. It put down the 1907 Iquique Strike, machine-gunning 2000 working class men, women and children. In the 1925 Coruna massacre 3000 workers were butchered to death by this "neutral" army in the salpetre mines. In the 1946 protest movements the same army killed 8 people. Again in 1957 two students were murdered by the army in demonstrations against bus-fare rises

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resulting in large-scale riots. The army was again used and 60 people were murdered by it. In 1966, in the US-owned El Teniente mine, workers went on strike for higher wages. A sympathy strike by other northern miners was declared illegal by the Government. Troops were ordered to invade the union building at Annaconda's El Salvador mine. Six mine workers and two women were murdered and 40 badly wounded. In 1969 the Grupo Movil, a specially trained patrol group, killed nine and injured 30 farm workers in Puerto Montt as they forcibly evicted 100 peasant families who had peaceably occupied a piece of unused land. These bare and brute facts of the history of the Chilean army are the same as that of any capitalist army and show the vital truth of the revolutionary marxist tradition which says that the capitalist state whose very core is its army and police, is an engine of oppression against workers and peasants in the service of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. It must be smashed and replaced by the general arming of the labouring people.

In the June 29th coup sailors in Santiago refused to obey the orders of the army top brass. In the context of the calling of a General Strike against the attempted coup and intensive united front work for the defence of these sailors, the first moves in the smashing up of the Chilean army and its replacement by soldiers committees, exercising veto over the top brass and linking with the workers, was on the agenda. That this was so is shown further by events in Valdivia. Shortly after the June coup a group of high-ranking officers began there to prepare a new coup to overthrow Allende. They were opposed, denounced and effectively vetoed by low-ranking officers and soldiers. Rather than organising a general strike against the coup and building a united front to defend these rebellious soldiers and sailors the UP government once more capitulated. True to Allende's promises to protect the army of the capitalist class from dissolution his UP government gave the orders imprisoning and punishing the rebellious squaddies. In the absence of a revolutionary marxist party leadership in them, the cordones did not rise to the task of preparing and forcing a general strike

rebuilding a united front campaign in defence of the sailors that could have opened the prospect of rank and file soldiers and sailors committees in the army. The degree to which the Cordones failed to see themselves as seedbeds of an alternative leadership to the reformist and centrist leadership of the trade union movement (CUT) can be gauged from the following quote:

"They are in no way planned as parallel organs to the CUT, which they recognise as the highest organisation of the Chilean working people at a national level". (Tarea Urgente magazine of the Cordones, July 1973).

"Furthermore, we accept categorically that we should respect the main lines laid down by the CUT and the political leaders but we hold the right to implement and complement these policies according to the realities of each cordon under the supreme principle of workers democracy". (Central Committee of the Cordones in Cerillos, Vicuna McKenna and O'Higgins and Central Santiago.) The 'political leaders' referred to were the UP.

Given the treachery of the reformist UP leaders, and the absence of a revolutionary party fighting for a concrete programme in the cordones, the bourgeoisie were able to take the dress-rehearsal coup of June as the signal to make an all-out assault on workers and peasants. This coup they successfully unleashed four years ago, proving once more the ability of reformism and stalinism to deliver up the working class to the concentration camps again in our time as it did in the 20's and 30's in Italy, Germany and Spain.

ROLE OF THE 'FOURTH INTERNATIONAL' - THE U.S.F.I.

The USFI had two sections in Chile - the Chilean Communist League (member) and the Socialist Revolutionary Party-PSR (sympathising). Both were stymied by the deep-entry tactics of post-war Trotskyism. These tactics in turn were based on a totally unscientific political economy of the post-World-War-Two period. In this pseudo-political economic landscape the perspective was of a world faced with the imminent return of another slump and the probability of a Third World War. This

catastrophic perspective dictated the submerging of Trotskyism in the Socialist Party of Chile. In implementing this deep entry the Fourth International (USFI) lost an independent public combat role and the significant support of Chilean workers which it had won in the 30s and 40s.

The outcome was a growing restiveness on the part of the most potentially revolutionary and active forces in the Chilean Socialist Party. This issued in the formation of the MIR as a centrist breakaway in the sixties. Despite this warning sign no re-assessment by the USFI took place. In a document called "Partido Y Tactica" of spring 71 of the general secretary of the former TRO (Tendencia Revolucionaria de Octubre), which fused in Nov. 1972 with the Frente Revolucionario Trotskista to form the PSR, a sympathising section of the USFI, the following statement is central:

"In the present circumstances the stress on our work inside the Socialist Party must necessarily have priority. We should free solely whatever forces are necessary to maintain an independent political expression, recognising the fact that certain organisational compromises are necessary. We propose a position of critical support for the healthy and lively tendencies which exist inside the Socialist Party, solidarising with them in the heat of the combat and attempting to transform them in the direction which the masses require for their definitive triumph".

The implication of this is that the instrument the working class needs for its definitive triumph is not a revolutionary party built on the methods of Lenin and Trotsky but an organisation formed from the USFI's alchemy in pushing the healthy left-moving currents inside the Socialist Party further left and supplying them with antidotes to reformism. The Liga Comunista Chilena (official section of the USFI) held the same perspective in a more right-wing key. By the time the PSR finally came out of the Socialist Party at the end of '72 it was far too late. However late, the chances in the following year for a party which had re-discovered and forged out the basic methods of

(continued)

revolutionary Marxism were immense, especially around events such as Millas' hand-back plan, the reaction to it, the June coup, the mutiny of Santiago sailors, the El Teniente strikes etc.

The PSR failed in these tests as did the L.C.C. The claims of the USFI to be the genuine successors of Lenin and Trotsky's methods ring hollow against their dismal record of zig-zagging behind the reformists and centrists of the UP and the MIR. We challenge them to attempt to defend the record of their sections in Chile.

STRUGGLE AT TYNAGH

THE LESSONS OF DIRECT ACTION AGAINST REPRESSION BY THE RANK AND FILE

Three workers, the "Tynagh Three", employed at Tynagh Mines in Galway county, all members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers AUEW, were detained and brutally interrogated in Eglinton St Garda Station in Galway in February 1977 under the Emergency Powers Act.

Two of them were charged with stealing explosives and the third, a miner, with membership of the IRA. The Tynagh bosses suspended them from their jobs immediately although nothing has even yet been proven against them. Two of them (the other was a foreman) were suspended without pay.

SOLIDARITY

The issue was kept under the carpet in Loughrea (the nearby town) and Galway City until members of the Galway Civil Liberties Action Committee sent a delegation to Tynagh to collect the facts. This was a joint action committee against repression involving the Irish Workers Group, Revolutionary Struggle and several trade unionists, apprentices and students. (RS since left the committee to set up a branch of ICRA which failed.)

The Committee issued leaflets in all the main factories in Galway about the case. It was also distributed to AUEW West Galway branch meetings. These leaflets which were sent to all

left and republican papers and to TUCAR, were also distributed widely inside Tynagh mines. They broke the silence preserved by the bosses, trade union bureaucracy and police, including in the Trades Council the local AUEW bureaucrats and the ITGWU County Branch Secretary and member of the C.P. Throughout, nothing was done by any of Provisional Sinn Fein's publications to air the issue.

PICKETS ON TYNAGH

When one of the Tynagh Three, under the advice of the Civil Liberties Committee, had fought for industrial action in the AUEW to get back his job he was told that it was a political case and that the AUEW must "keep" the good will of their Protestant (Loyalist) brothers in northern Ireland in mind. He achieved nothing in terms of official backing and decided to open up the issue by placing a picket on Tynagh mines gates. The Committee advised that the picket should focus on pre-judgement by the Tynagh bosses and the right to work pending an investigation of the case acceptable to the rank and file of the AUEW in Galway and the Republic. In any case, the picket demanded full pay. It was successful in this aim due to the fact that several key workers refused to pass it despite the intense fire-brigade work of a pro-boss shop -

steward from the Kilcomrack branch of the AUEW. This refusal made a general meeting of Tynagh craftsmen inevitable and representatives sent from this meeting secured 40 hours pay and bonus for the miner until the time of the trial.

This was a victory for direct action taken in the teeth of conservative bureaucrats and shop stewards; but the miner was still cut off from his mates and denied the right to work without being given any chance to prove his innocence or argue his case. Then, of course, there was the other two workers. One, being a foreman, was on the 'staff' and got paid all along. The other would not join the picket. He got nothing.

CONFIDENCE

Once the ice was broken by direct action, however, resentment against the saturation of Tynagh Mines by Gardai and Army began to grow. This came to a head when a member of the Electrical Trade Union (ETU) was taken away for interrogation at Loughrea Station.

All the workers marched in formation from Tynagh to Loughrea Station demanding an end to harrassing searches of Tynagh workers and gave the Gardai till six o' clock to release the ETU member or charge him. He was let out uncharged before six. (IWG was critical of the slogan 'or charge him' because we believe in fighting for the release of all who are 'lifted' under repressive or emergency laws whether or not charged.)

Only the country edition of the "Tribune" carried any report of this march - no doubt because it was an event of too much significance in showing how workers' direct action is the only real road to defeat repression and smash the hold of British Imperialism over Ireland - which this repression is used to defend. News of the march to Loughrea got into Radio Telefis Eireann after members of GCLAC got a chain of phone calls into RTE in protest at lack of coverage.

NOT OVER YET

The trial of the three charged has been put back again and again. No-one knows exactly why, but one view

is that some of the charges are so unproven that they have little chance of sticking even in the Special Criminal Court. And then, those cleared could bring charges against Gardai who brutalised them. Neither GCLAC nor TUCAR members in Galway support the tactic of bringing charges against the Gardai. If they succeed they only bolster illusions in the 'justice' of the bosses courts. But the guards, and especially one of their local torturers, well known as such, are frightened.

THE LATEST VICTORY

TUCAR members in Galway advised the miner who led the fight to take up his case in the AUEW and arranged a series of national contacts for him. Failing to get any official backing from AUEW in Galway he approached Galway TUCAR members to organise action. (TUCAR had been launched since the original action.) A picket on the Tynagh ore depot in Galway docks was proposed, and contact with the dockers on this. It was planned to have Tynagh itself picketed or occupied depending on the support and to mobilise all possible support through TUCAR. The outcome was that before action could be taken the Tynagh bosses caved in from sheer fright and on Monday October 17 the miner went back to work. A meeting of AUEW decided to build on this, despite having sat on the fence all along, and demanded the re-instatement of the others. Neither wanted to come back, but the one who hadn't been paid was conceded a full week's pay and bonus until a verdict emerges.

The task now is to build on these small but crucial class struggles, to have the charges dropped, the Special Criminal Court abolished and the Army out of Tynagh mines. Dublin District AUEW must be won to help out in this. A small beginning would be to invite the miner to address them on his ordeal and his success so far.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-
DROP THE CHARGES ON THE TYNAGH 3!

ARMY OUT OF TYNAGH MINES NOW!
ABOLISH THE SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT!

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-
JOIN THE TRADE UNION CAMPAIGN
AGAINST REPRESSION NOW!

ON TUC.A.R.

The "Trade Union Campaign Against Repression" (TUCAR) is an important initiative by the "far left" groups, which IWG has supported and publicised since its beginnings. Our support, however, has always been critical, and our criticisms are presented at some length in this article with the emphasis on the important questions it raises for revolutionaries. The dominant perspectives in the TUCAR are those of the Socialist Workers' Movement (fraternal organisation of the British SWP), the League for a Workers' Republic (section of the OCRFI) and the Movement for a Socialist Republic (section of the USFI). Since its substantial beginnings, TUCAR has remained utterly passive, in the midst of sharply posed national issues of repression, to a degree that puts the previous few committees of the left quite in the shade. Why this should be so can only be understood by a political analysis of TUCAR's perspectives.

FIGHT REPRESSION
-ON CLASS DEMANDS!
-WITH DIRECT ACTION!

In a country of specially deep exploitation of workers and oppression of women, Repression of socialists and republicans has at all times stood out as a feature of the two Irish states since their foundation. The imperialist penetration and economic dependency of the South, and the instability of Britain's puppet Northern state necessitated the suppression of dissent in any form. The reactionary ideologies of the churches and loyalism, though enormously powerful, were never successful in domesticating or crushing the one deeply threatening anti-imperialist current in Ireland - Republicanism.

Again and again the IRA pitted itself in guerilla campaigns against the armed forces of the Northern state. The special armed forces and constabulary, internment and arbitrary legal powers in the North were necessary for the survival of that state, threatened as it was by the nationalist minority. The role of this cruel apparatus was to enforce a reign of intimidation and discrimination against the minority and only in that context to specifically attack the IRA which has had its popular base among the anti-unionists.

Meanwhile, the IRA was dogged by the Southern Special Branch instituted to run them to ground. Periodically it was attacked viciously and openly by the Southern state with anti-democratic laws, internment and executions.

Throughout the life of these states so far, the Labour Movement has been politically paralysed by its division between North and South into the stranglehold of two ideologies which fed on their superficial opposition; "green" bourgeois catholicism and protestant pro-imperialist "orangeism". In a way that neatly complemented Republican elitism, and the trade union and labour leaderships reinforced working class isolation from the struggle for national independence and unity - its own unity.

Repression, therefore, while explicitly practised on republicans, was a pervasive feature of both parts of Ireland which constantly threatened any form of radical or militant dissent.

At most times in the North, and in specific periods in the South, a campaign against repressive practices and laws and against the existence of exceptional armed forces was a key necessity in any programme for working class advance.

In the absence of any revolutionary socialist tradition in Ireland, however, no such programme was ever fought for. The Labour Party was clearly pro-imperialist, and the rump stalinist "Communist" Party was incapable of arguing for an independent working class perspective of fighting repression. Even when it was in opportunist alliance with Sinn Fein in the NICRA and in its Bill of Rights slogan and its attacks on the Provos showed itself

treacherous to such a perspective.

Revolutionary tendencies emerged at the end of the sixties in a period of radicalisation around national liberation struggles and growing working-class militancy which came to a peak worldwide around 1968. Thus, the general conditions favourable to the struggle for 'civil rights' in the North were the same as gave birth to the present revolutionary currents in Ireland. However, far from bringing the clarity and concreteness of a marxist programme to bear on the struggles surrounding them from birth, the "revolutionary left" has merely reflected the confusions of the struggle and displayed anything but a consistent independent class perspective on the question of national independence and unity; for it is indeed a class question, twin with workers' economic struggles, and there can be no advance by the Irish working class towards its own liberation unless it takes up this struggle as its own. In this context, the single most palpable and persistent issue which the national struggle has posed in the past 8 years is repression North and South.

WHY THE LEFT BUILT NOTHING

Concerning the various attempts of the left to fight repression it is necessary to point out why they were double failures, failing not only to draw in sections of workers (a difficult task), but also failing to carry forward from one issue to the next any organised nucleus or consistent working class perspective. This latter failing is not explained by the difficulty of mobilising workers, to which it is an obstacle, but by the confusion in the programmes of the left.

The perspective of building a working class campaign against repression is what distinguishes TUCAR from the PD/RS/Sinn Fein backed "Irish Civil Rights Association" (ICRA), or the 1976 "United Campaign Against the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill" (an alliance of ICRA and six far-left groups), or the "Murray Defence Campaign" (another far-left alliance), or the "Kildare Six Defence Committee" (IRSP), or the "Committee for the Defence of Women Political Prisoners" (left groups 1975), or the "Mc Anulty Defence Committee" (1977, left groups), all of which operated in the South.

None of these committees had a perspective of building a working-class

campaign, and none of them in practice treated the single issues with which they dealt as a basis for an ongoing generalised political perspective of anti-repression work, locked as they often were in "humanitarian" projects and cliquish circles.

The recent short-lived "Mc Anulty Defence" initiative brought to the surface all of the spurious rationalisations which have diverted the left groups from campaigning in the working class. It was claimed that "we must of course base ourselves on the working class", but it appears this is to be understood as some sort of subjective attitude, because there was not a hint of what it might mean in practice and it was added, especially by MSR and PD, that "the working class aren't ready to move and we musn't exclude other layers of society". Did this mean a united front with the republican movement? No! Explicitly it meant "actions such as pickets by ICRA", liaison with bodies such as the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Gaelic League, the Prisoners Rights Organisation, the Wolfe Tone Society etc. After all, it was said, the working class is not found only in the trade unions.

Yes, but the working class as working class is not to be found at football matches. And what of the trade union movement anyway? In that respect the brilliant answer of the Mc Anulty Defence Committee was that they were "writing to TUCAR!" So, the left groups as defenders of Mc Anulty, the PD member, were writing to the Left groups as TUCAR! Why TUCAR had not pre-empted the Mc Anulty campaign with its own action and why it never took up the issue at all becomes plain below, but what's recorded here clearly shows one half of why a working class based campaign was never attempted - that is, because half of the left (MSR, PD, RS, RRP) reckoned it proper that the petit-bourgeois and sundry nationalist currents should substitute for the working class, or lead sections of it, as long as they showed sympathy with the cause of national unity. The other half of the left, such as SWM, and LWR (though LWR rarely joined in any of the initiatives), while it rarely displayed illusions in nationalists and republicans, bowed to the political backwardness of the class, downgraded the importance of repression as a

political issue and either refused to take up the issue in the class or so emasculated its significance that they ended up trailing behind the trade union leadership.

It is this latter tendency that an analysis of TUCAR's leadership and platform reveals - opportunism and trailing.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST I W G

At the founding conference in July we argued for working-class demands and direct-action methods. We were accused then and later of being too "principled", of being too "political", and, ironically, of daring to put forward "socialist" demands in a question of mere "democratic rights".

In the first instance, we are a tiny revolutionary communist group in a society which has no revolutionary communist tradition. Our central task is to take initiatives in sections of the class of a kind that develop clear and independent class-conscious action on the key issues of the moment. We have no other way to develop a stratum in the class in which the nucleus of a party can ultimately regroup and grow. To "tactically" abandon marxist principles (opportunism) is to postpone our key task, probably lose sight of it forever, and gain exactly nothing. We say "nothing" not only because of the evidence of seven years of opportunism but because the political currents we would actually strengthen by not adhering to our principles are in fact petty bourgeois to the core.

In the second place, yes, we fight for a political aim in anti-repression work. Repression is not an aberration by police and soldiers. It is a necessity of imperialism and a policy of both states in Ireland. The working class has an incorruptible material interest in ending it, for otherwise it can never liberate itself. It is essential in bringing the working class to the leadership of the struggle for democratic rights to bring a class and anti-capitalist perspective to the fore in our agitation and propaganda. Only the most class-conscious or anti-imperialist workers will respond to the fight against repression in the present

period, but an organisation which does not demand their serious commitment to its stated aims and which disguises its political character by posing as an acceptable ginger group in the unions will not hold such militants. We did not and do not "seek to make TUCAR a political party" just because we argue to bind its leaders and members to act in a principled manner in solidarity with each other on its very limited aims.

As for the third charge which we greet as a tribute to our consistency, the matter of putting forward "socialist" demands instead of "democratic" demands, it is necessary to restate communist principles, especially in order to discuss later the question of "jury trials".

Revolutionary marxists share the understanding that in the present crisis of capitalism the bourgeoisie cannot be relied upon, least of all in Ireland, to defend or advance those democratic liberties which were necessary for capitalism itself to develop to the stage of monopoly. The working class movement, however, on peril of its very existence, must always fight for the completion of the struggle for democratic rights and for the defence of existing liberties.

The working class needs democratic rights, however, for different reasons than the bourgeoisie. In struggling for working class emancipation and the overthrow of capitalism, Marxists understand that the bourgeois parliamentary and judicial system cannot be let hold back the struggle for socialism. The needs of the working class involve smashing those institutions, in a revolution certainly, but also by opposing them ruthlessly now in day-to-day cases where they are used against working class or anti-imperialist activists. We demand the protection of laws and judicial rights, but we reject any resort to these very same institutions whenever they are used to strengthen the hand of imperialism against us or bolster illusions in their "neutrality" as between the classes. They remain bourgeois class institutions. Therefore, in certain cases, some democratic rights are not called for by socialists. In such cases the needs of our class go beyond the "democratic right" to a revolutionary demand. In such cases

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..the "bourgeois democratic" demand is not a "step towards" the revolutionary need of the class but a diversion from it and a weapon in the hands of the state against its achievement, a weapon with which it can defuse opposition.

BEGINNINGS OF T.U.C.A.R.

Four years after the passage of the "Offences Against the State Amendment Act" in the South, and five years after republicans were herded into Long Kesh, SWM began in April to organise a "trade union campaign against repression". The first two organising meetings in April established a platform for TUCAR which was supposed to be subject to discussion and amendment at a founding conference in July 1977. The ad-hoc organising meetings, however, had no democratic procedure, and in that context only the lowest common level of "agreement" found its way into the demands of TUCAR.

If a vote had been allowed at that time then it is scarcely conceivable that the major immediate demand would have been for an "independent" inquiry into prisons. An IWG speaker argued for a Labour Movement inquiry, as did some members of SWM (using the term "trade union", however, as their perspective excludes involving the Labour Party rank and file). The SWM chairperson, however, was not entertaining any voting on issues and ruled that the most widely agreed (sic) position was "an independent inquiry", meaning according to its only enthusiastic defenders (LWR) an inquiry by the state.

THE APRIL MEETINGS

It is absolutely necessary to go over the main events of these two early meetings to explain the platform of TUCAR because the deliberately curtailed debate of the "founding" conference in July did not reveal the particular tendencies involved clearly.

At the meeting of 30 activists on April 3rd, LWR were clear about what they wanted by way of an inquiry into repression. We put a counter position, ill prepared we admit; but we had been deliberately passed over in the invitations to the meeting and intruded a little late. (it was a meeting "by invitation").

SWM attached little importance to the distinction between a working-class

inquiry and a so-called 'independent state inquiry. Their conception of TUCAR, and this is crucial, was as a body which would pressure the unions to act on resolutions already passed, and that this was "enough" for TUCAR to do. (They presented a list of resolutions collated from various unions and branches.) While this is an essential part of TUCAR's work, in so far as the content of the resolutions means anything, but it could not be a perspective for a campaign.

One woman militant proposed that the Toyota experience of strike threats to prevent arrests on the work site should set a headline for the use of direct action in TUCAR campaigns. She was ignored.

The proposal that the ad-hoc committee should call for the release of the Murrays, then awaiting re-trial, was fobbed off with the suggestion of issuing a press statement. Not even that much was done. LWR and the present TUCAR secretary claimed that, of course, they supported the idea of freeing the Murrays but publicly, they said, they were only prepared to call for a jury trial for them and for the abolition of capital punishment. They only wanted to advance a "purely democratic" platform on prisons, brutality, emergency powers and the use of injunctions against strikers. The question for them was not what were the necessary class demands on the issues but "what precisely is going to give us the ear of a large number of workers".

Unfortunately, at the present time, there is a conflict between what demands on certain issues will win the active support of class-conscious militants and anti-imperialists and what will win immediately the passive "ear" of a trade union movement largely hostile to the anti-imperialist struggle.

The meeting of April 3rd threshed through the topics of repressive legislation, the Special Court, Prisoners, and injunctions against strikers. Against police brutality during detention the only suggestion was a solidarity network to raise speedy protest action, but for all the glib talk about this it was obviously too much like direct action

for the TUCAR leadership. In other words, nothing was done about it. The chairperson took away notes of what was considered to be a consensus. A committee was nominated.

The IWG representative make a mistake in refusing the nomination of sympathisers to go on the committee, even if on the correct observation that its major demands were misconceived and the attitude to agitation timid. His belief that the open July conference would allow a proper debate and vote on motions and elections proved to be naive.

The April 15th meeting was presented with a statement of aims which had never, therefore, been put to a vote and which became so difficult to change that when SWM themselves had finished attacking our position in July on the "Labour Movement Inquiry under rank and file control", and themselves called for a "trade union inquiry", they were defeated on a vote by the very backwardness they had cultivated.

(It is important to note that their ultimate reservations about our motion on this were against the reference to 'political prisoners' and 'rank and file control'. We voted for their motion, nevertheless, after they had ensured the defeat of ours, but in vain.)

The draft demands of April 15 were as follows:

"TUCAR stands for:

- *Repeal of the Emergency Powers Act and defence of those arrested and detained without charge under that Act.
- *Repeal of the Offences Against the State Act and re-instatement of those barred from public service jobs because of convictions under it.
- *Abolition of the Special Criminal court and return to trial by jury.
- *Trade union access to prisoners and trade union representation on an independent inquiry into prison conditions.
- *Abolition of capital punishment.
- *An end to the use of courts and police against strikers and to Special Branch interference in matters of employment.
- *An end to political restrictions on press and broadcasting. "

As for its willingness to engage in action of any sort, the ad-hoc TUCAR was by this time so convinced that it would "win the ear" of significant numbers of workers by mild reformist propaganda that the revolutionaries so-called at the April 15 meeting rejected a proposal to organise a meeting against picket-injunctions for the Ross shipyard strikers. It was from the strikers themselves that the suggestion had come through SWM. LWR and MSR, however, were against holding 'premature' public meetings which would mean "jumping the gun" and being seen as something other than a bona fide group of ordinary trade unionists. We maintain that it was the mere hint of real working class militancy that worried them, for public meetings were held to recruit in Cork and Limerick.

THE JULY CONFERENCE

The agenda and proposed constitution for the July 10th founding meeting were circulated at short notice and motions were not invited for prior circulation, despite an undertaking from the committee at the insistence of IWG in April that the agenda should be issued within two weeks.

As a further indication that the TUCAR leaders were not serious about the need for democratic discussion before voting on aims and methods, the committee arranged for no less than five platform speakers to fill slots in the brief five-hour conference. NO session was set aside for discussion of aims. Furthermore, the speakers on Prisoners Rights, Prisoners Welfare and on Injunctions, none of whom supports direct action by workers or an independent working class perspective, wasted the precious time of the 60 members and many observers present who wouldn't have been there at all if they had needed lectures on the plight of prisoners.

The only valuable platform speaker was a worker who effectively showed the power of direct action in defiance of court injunctions. What an insult to him and to the serious militants present, therefore, that he should have been invited, applauded and then his clear message trampled on by the LWR and other TUCAR leaders who at every turn explicitly opposed or acquiesced to the LWR in opposing any commitment to direct action.

PROCEDURE AT JULY MEETING

The questions of method and demands were the focus of IWG contributions. Our motions related to the seven points of the draft platform. We had no committee position to secure any special speaking rights. We raised no unwritten off-the-cuff motions but were the only ones, on the question of aims, to circulate motions in writing before the meeting for the sake of elementary democratic procedure. We accepted the reasonable drafting amendments of Northern members to extend the demands to Northern courts and laws. (In fact we had been the only ones at the ad-hoc meetings to raise the question of involving Northern members.)

The ridiculous limit of an hour and a half in which to do the entire business of the conference meant that we couldn't possibly argue adequately for our seven motions. This was the conscious arrangement by the committee. The only defence of their position is that either the aims and method of TUCAR were not serious enough matters to merit debate or that they were too serious to allow debate which might pose a challenge to their own proposals. Our demand for adequate discussion, supported by many at the meeting when we tried to have the schedule changed, is entirely justified in retrospect when one examines the impotent perspective actually adopted and the disgraceful passivity of TUCAR which has flowed from it.

WHAT WE FOUGHT FOR

The most revealing and testing motion put by IWG, the one most fiercely opposed by LWR, MSR, SWM and the RS group, which we insisted on putting despite losing the vote on five of our six proposals, concerned the behaviour of TUCAR members and officers should they come before the courts:

"That in appearances before the Special Criminal Court all officers and members of TUCAR be instructed to refuse to recognise the court, and in appearances before any court in any case of repression that officers and members be instructed to support the aims and principles of TUCAR".

This is not a blanket non-recognition of courts in general, only of the Special Court (SCC). The reference to other courts only involves an obligation to argue there for the principles of

TUCAR. If TUCAR is worth anything its leaders or its best activists may very well find themselves in contempt of court orders or the courts themselves. What we say is that only by refusing to apologise to the courts for our principles can we build an effective campaign which is seen to be serious in opposing repression. To attack the judicial system, to publicly campaign in defence of people facing "trial" means risking the charge of "contempt".

The most crucial point of all, and it really should have been obvious to the 'marxists', is the question of solidarity in defiance of repressive measures. This becomes clear from a look at non-recognition of the SCC. Many Provisionals have refused to recognise it as a matter of principle, to their own enormous cost. This has had a certain consequence for their morale, but they have never seen fit to harness this enormous heroism into a political campaign of solidarity through demonstrations making the court unworkable and a focus for street-protests.

We do not believe any member of TUCAR should be asked to defy the SCC except in the context of real solidarity action from all of TUCAR's members and the groups of workers they can mobilise to demonstrate. Sacrificial lambs have no value for us. Defiance of the court has only one use - to end it, and only the perspective of total solidarity by TUCAR (even at the risk of their own liberty) could justify asking anyone to refuse recognition.

LWR, SWM, MSR etc. have destroyed the possibility of TUCAR developing this perspective and only new policies can retrieve it.

What the other left groups believe is that we can build a campaign against repression in which the members and leaders are free to apologise for their principles once their actions bring them up against the state. We challenged them to say where they draw the line between personal choice and commitment to TUCAR. They would not answer the IWG.

We join TUCAR to fight repression, to defeat a monster that we know to threaten disaster to

all our class. We must therefore be prepared to take the risks involved in solidarity action. Instead of demonstrating the seriousness of purpose that attracts the best activists, especially republicans whose sacrifices put Irish marxism to shame, the LWR, SWM, MSR and RS argued for the perspective of not making any demands on the members, so as to recruit more: and for what? Certainly not to agitate against repression. In fact, on the evidence, for nothing at all!

It's not Marxism that guides these lefts, but fantasy. By speaking and writing opposition to the Special Criminal Court they expect to abolish it! No doubt, if the state itself were to discontinue the SCC after jailing every active republican these 'leaders' would claim some of the credit for its abolition!

ON DIRECT ACTION

The dominant political groups in TUCAR opposed the call for direct action which we fought for. LWR was the most frank in stating that they were "against any commitment to direct action" (their emphasis). SWM and MSR acquiesced in this and voted against both of the motions in which we tried to tie TUCAR to this commitment, the first calling for:

"Direct action in defence of all those arrested and detained under the Emergency Powers Act or the Offences Against the State Act whether with or without charge".

Although we accepted an amendment to include Northern repressive laws the motion was defeated both for the reason above and because of the explicit mention of "with or without charge". This contrasts with the purely legalist formulations of the committee's own proposals (see above). A concession to our position is reflected in the verbal commitment to defence of those "arrested" under repressive laws and our proposal was accepted to change the demand on re-instatement of workers lifted by the police under these laws:

"re-instatement of workers dismissed for conviction or detention under Offences Against the State Act and Emergency Powers Act".

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This proposal reflected our experience in the case of the Tynagh Three who were suspended from work, two without pay immediately they were charged.

PICKETS

After the example of the Poolbeg strike leader who addressed the meeting it should have been automatic to adopt our motion calling for

"direct action to defy injunctions used against pickets, and support for workers engaged in occupations".

However, the same lefts for the same reason ensured instead that TUCAR stands for:

"an end to interference by courts and police in industrial disputes".

That a demand should be sharp rather than vague, concrete rather than abstract, that it should say what workers must do rather than that the state should surrender the use of its own forces, are matters of concern to marxists. The vagueness, however, would be a secondary matter if there were reason to believe that TUCAR would take action on the issue. However, in four months since adopting a disarming slogan we have witnessed the use of the army to break the maintenance workers' strikes in several places with no response from TUCAR. A politically crucial situation in Dublin which has dragged on all through those months reveals the uselessness of the TUCAR committee. They have done little called no meetings, even of the many Dublin members, in support of pickets at Gouldings who have been fighting the injunctions handed down against them. Even the passing of sentence of imprisonment on them failed to win a response from the TUCAR committee. No excuses can redeem such pathetic passivity; nor is it merely the failure of individuals. It is the failure of a political perspective which we were alone in opposing.

ON CENSORSHIP

To the vague committee proposal of "An end to political restrictions on press and broadcasting" we counterposed the demand:

"Repeal of section 31 of the Broadcasting Act and support for all those resisting censorship".

Political restrictions on the press are not significantly enshrined in any particular law. It is in the nature of the bourgeois press to censor and moderate news, articles, and correspondence embarrassing to the ruling class. Therefore, only direct resistance by the workers involved can either expose or stop particularly obvious acts of censorship. The frequent use of "sub-judice" embargoes on the press and the occasional attempts of the police to force disclosure of journalists' news sources are the kind of concrete restrictions imposed by the state apparatus. The perspective of legal reforms, therefore, only touches marginally on the problem. The policy to which news production workers and journalists must be won is defiance of key acts of censorship and maximum exposure of them. The obligation on TUCAR is clearly to support anyone taking action against restrictions on freedom of expression.

Also, because censorship as a formal legal institution for dealing with books, periodicals, films, etc. is a central issue in Ireland in the oppression of women, our formulation should have been a welcome clarification and concretisation of where and how we can effectively do battle. Only sheer sectarianism can explain how not only SWM and LWR but also MSR who took part in defying the ban on Spare Rib, found it impossible to write off the question of censorship in relation to women. For the rest, the avoidance of active support of workers as the method of TUCAR accounts for their opposition.

The left said our demand was not general enough in relation to press and broadcasting and too general in relation to "censorship" (taken to include books and magazines. However, generality is not the issue but concreteness. The TUCAR formulation is abstract, neither focussing against anything in particular nor calling for any action. Ours, by contrast, focusses on the most noxious and well known legal restriction on broadcasting and proposes solidarity with those defying censorship, e.g. the Family Planning Association who continued to sell their pamphlet on contraception after it was banned, the feminists who defied the ban on Spare Rib, or casting one's mind back, the journalist who went to jail rather than disclose the sources of an interview. If the chairman of TUCAR had himself defended the right of publication of letters on the Murray's

trial instead of apologising to the courts, he would have been compelled by the logic of his position to support our demand.

Of course, we agree, TUCAR's fate does not depend on the correct formulation of this demand, but only a relentless exposure of the abstraction and reformism of the TUCAR platform can lay a basis for adopting worthwhile policies.

THE INQUIRY ISSUE

Perhaps the most inane of all statements in the TUCAR debate was LWR's claim that the Widgery inquiry into Bloody Sunday had been a positive gain for the anti-unionists. If we leave aside the fact that "Widgery" still serves for "whitewash" in Irish political language we are still left with LWR's contention that it publicised the issue and officially revealed information that could be turned against the imperialists, that therefore because the inquiry was a real possibility, it was correct to call for it.

While not dwelling either on the hurricane of rage unleashed at that time, or its possibilities for revolutionaries, a State inquiry into the events was the most defusing slogan that could have been raised then. How would it arm or direct the action by anti-unionists? Did the people of Derry, Belfast or Dublin need to be told by the British state what they already knew? Were they to ask the barbarous imperialists to demonstrate magnanimity in accusing themselves? Widgery was an outrageously successful ploy by the British State in defusing militancy against itself.

It was LWR's insistence, on a state inquiry again, into prisons (and presumably brutality, etc) and SWM's tolerance of it in the interests of consensus that led TUCAR to call for an "independent" inquiry. MSR supported the formulation, if not exactly the LWR's interpretation, by saying that if the state didn't do it that TUCAR should get it going jointly with nationalist organisations, prisoners' groups etc. To compound the mish-mash, the TUCAR committee proposed "trade union representation" as so much holy water on a doubtful enterprise:

"Trade union access to prisoners and...

...trade union representation on an independent inquiry into prison conditions".

The Prisoners' Rights Organisation (who, by the way have done far more on the streets for the TUCAR demand than T. itself!), the Prisoners Welfare Association, Irish Council for Civil Liberties, lawyers, members of Fianna Fail and sundry groups were calling for such an "independent" inquiry to be set up by the state. (It was generally understood to include both or variously prison conditions and police brutality.) All of these groups, by their nature, and the RS group from a quasi-anarchist position, insisted that they were not making a special case for political prisoners. But the truth is that it was political prisoners who posed the issue and precipitated in the process a battle with the police at Portlaoise and a march of 6,000 people in Dublin.

The period in which TUCAR thus aligned itself with these groups was one in which police brutality against political activists, not least the Murrays, had led even the bourgeois press to attack the police. It was the Provisionals' hunger strike in Portlaoise prison against their conditions of detention that called forth from sections of the bourgeoisie the demand for an "independent" inquiry to exhonerate the majority of the police and prison officials, to punish the few and to reform the "abuses". All of these bodies were extremely careful to avoid any reference to which prisoners or to link the problems in any way to the question of imperialism. This then is the position for which the 'left' argued in TUCAR! We opposed it with the call for:

"A LABOUR MOVEMENT INQUIRY UNDER RANK AND FILE CONTROL INTO POLICE BRUTALITY AND THE PRISON CONDITIONS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS".

MSR were vitriolic in arguing against "cliches about rank and file control". SWM, irked at our making an issue of rank and file control (about which they have moralised for years in their paper) actually applauded the MSR. RS railed against the mention of "political" prisoners.

LWR accused us of putting forward socialist demands in a country where we had yet to achieve a democratic programme!

In what sense is ours a "socialist" demand, and is there a "democratic" demand which answers the concrete problem without in any way undermining the working class?

The demand contains a strictly working class perspective because in the particular issue any other position, such as backing the liberals in the bourgeoisie, leads to belief that there can ever be such a thing as an "independent" inquiry into the plight of anti-imperialists by the same state as has imprisoned them. Our demand focuses on the political nature of the prisoners involved. Clearly, this is an issue in which the "bourgeois democratic" demand for an inquiry by the state into the plight of its enemies cannot be supported by socialists. We defend the republican prisoners. We reject the right of the state to jail them. We will get no applause from the trade unions for this position, but we believe that class-conscious workers will have no time for the so-called "impartiality" of the state's inquiry. Furthermore, the perspective of a working-class inquiry is one that workers can support even if they are cynical about its initial chances in a bureaucratic trade union movement. Besides, and this is crucial, a working class inquiry is not just a workers' way of arriving at the same kind of facts that a state inquiry would discover with the difference that the state might sweep them under the carpet again.

The perspective is one of opening up a political debate in the organisations of the class around the need of the class itself to inquire into sharply posed and specific cases of brutality and the conditions of political prisoners. It is both a local and a class-wide demand.

It is a perspective which, while focussed on the fight for an inquiry by rank and file delegates, also opens up a debate on repression, its political context and British imperialism in Ireland.

It is not a demand which is attainable overnight in the way that the state might announce an inquiry. However, a perspective which does not believe that this can be achieved to

some significant degree must also refuse to believe that the working class can ever lead the struggle for national independence and unity. The concrete issues around which the demand should have been fought for, consistently, throughout the past 9 years, have been numerous. Moments such as Bloody Sunday, the introduction of the Emergency Powers etc. could have carried the demand forward in leaps and bounds if the left had been clear and ready.

The particular situation of this year: when several unions called for "independent" inquiries and when some branches called for a "labour movement" inquiry, when dozens of organisations were calling for an inquiry, when Amnesty International challenged the Government publicly, in such a year, are we to believe that no significant gains could have been made for the perspective of a Working-class inquiry? If so, we may as well give up now or wait for the class to plead with us to lead them.

So, LWR might reply; be all that as it may, at a suitable time ordained by the laws of history, the key thing is to get the state inquiry now because it is possible and because it will expose the whole issue publicly, and if the state doesn't grant it then that gives us ammunition against it.

In the first place, it is in the nature of a class state when inquiring into its own security apparatus to present the "facts" in a very particular light - as evidence of individual excesses, as a case for "humane" improvements. While we can with our tiny forces try to re-interpret such "official" admissions to some workers, we would have nevertheless asked many to call for the inquiry. Instead of battling against the tidal-wave of illusions in the neutrality of the state, preserving a consistent class position and drawing class-conscious workers to it, we would have strengthened the false consciousness. And for what? For crumbs of "official" information which however widely publicised would be so cast that they would deny us the possibility of turning them against the state.

The claims of torture and brutality are, without any official inquiry, already a substantial armoury in our battle to expose the state and to raise the call for a class inquiry which

would, of course, be determined to get the fullest possible exposure of every detail but only as part of interpreting and acting on the facts of repression from its own class point of view.

Secondly, why make demands on the state only to "expose it" when it refuses, if this means that we have to begin all over again to propagandise for our own class inquiry! The state already stands accused now. The question for revolutionaries is what are we to say to workers now about it. LWR's hedging of their call only shows what a tight corner their position really is.

Not knowing whether the state would or would not answer the call, they, ironically, only reflect the confusion of the ruling class itself. What a neat epitaph for their perspective when the state announced an inquiry which was not really an inquiry and threw all the liberal democrats into confusion. And what's more; there was even a trade union representative in the trio, charged with the onerous task of protecting the good name of the police and, perhaps, looking at safeguards for the victims of arbitrary arrest.

FINAL ARBITER - JURY OR CLASS ?

On the SCC, TUCAR's position is "Abolition of the Special Criminal Court - and return to trial by jury".

Our position is simply:

"Abolition of the Special Criminal Court."

For us this reference to juries signifies a profound difference in the perspectives offered to the class. Put simply, we oppose the SCC as a class institution, a weapon of the bosses state against the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland. It exists to facilitate the jailing of political opponents of imperialism when "evidence" for their activities is too scant for the other courts. But if we believe that such anti-imperialists are not guilty of any crime and should not be either jailed or tried by any bourgeois court (though they must be answerable to the working class), then what do we say if a jury finds them "guilty" after we have called for jury trial for them?

Clearly it is a case where the call for the "bourgeois democratic" right

to have a jury trial (which we defend) is an obstacle to our actual purpose when dealing with political prisoners. SWM believes that a jury trial for anti-imperialists would be a "step forward". But towards what? Certainly not towards a campaign for their release!

The abolition of the SCC will make it more difficult to "legally" lock away anti-imperialists, and many of them, in the absence of a mobilised working class campaign, isolated as they would be, might recognise ordinary courts and accept jury trials. It is folly, however, just because we call for the abolition of the Special Court to believe that we somehow must call for jury trial for anti-imperialists. Of course, the absence of a jury is one of the features that expose the real purpose of the SCC, but that does not mean that we call for jury trial for the victims of this court.

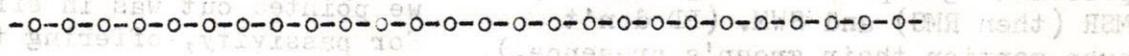
What we want is to build a campaign in the working class which can be the basis of ultimately freeing the republicans. Illusions in the 'justice' of jury trials, when we really believe there should be no trial of republicans, are an obstacle to us.

No jury other than the working class has the right to politically judge anti-imperialists, their cause, their methods, their organisations. Only a labour movement inquiry under rank and file control can do this.

CONCLUSION

TUCAR has done precious little in four months or more when measured against the sharply posed crucial issues which have dominated this interval. Since it went 'public' it has been presented with many possibilities for its propaganda, and in the pickets issue, for active mobilisation of its members and their supporters. Not until mid-November has it called its first meeting of its Dublin members!

Only a recall of all the members to assess its programme and leadership in favour of direct action and class demands can rescue the "Trade Union Campaign Against Repression".



When the Kesh was burned the PRRG had squandered the small but significant potential it had shown in August. It was inactive. The lessons of this period of the PRRG are clear to the IWB. ID and RSR bear most of the responsibility for the final collapse in a period when it might just have developed a hard and serious line had been fought for. ID records none of this. So much for "learning the lessons" of the past "mistakes".

A potential clearly existed for a situation of effectively emerged. In effectively the issue of effectively became a potential explosive point. In August, as ID point out, 5000 people marched under the leadership of the PRRG. Without the support of Sinn Féin. A potential clearly existed for a situation of effectively emerged. In effectively the issue of effectively became a potential explosive point. In August, as ID point out, 5000 people marched under the leadership of the PRRG. Without the support of Sinn Féin.

PD'S LOSS OF MEMORY

The Peoples Democracy group, the longest existing radical left-wing tendency thrown up by the struggles in the North, have recently been attempting to purge the organisation of its chronic ideological ultra-leftism by grounding its policies within a more traditional theoretical marxist framework.

As part of this process and the necessary examination of the past struggles involved, two articles of "UNfree Citizen" purported to 'seriously' analyse the lessons of the Political Hostages Release Campaign, a joint action committee involving left-wing groups and republicans. As most of PD's 'political conclusions' are couched in the vaguest and most impressionistic terms, it is difficult to conclude anything much about PD's development. However, there is one significant issue that reveals, we believe, that PD's seriousness about the past or present remains to be proved.

The PHRC's basic demands were:
End Internment;
British Troops Out;
End All Repressive Legislation.

After the exit of Sinn Fein the political groups remaining were PD, MSR (then RMG) and SWM. (PD don't even mention their group's presence.)

Sinn Fein withdrew after the Sunningdale "experiment", Sunningdale in action represented objectively a down-turn in the struggle. In that period it was imperative that the PHRC continue to propagandise on its basic demands, particularly Internment, and seek to build small but stable local committees in preparation for the inevitable changing circumstances bringing to the forefront again the sharpness of the basic issues and the possibility of agitation for the building of a mass movement under the leadership of the PHRC.

When Power Sharing failed, that situation objectively emerged. Increasingly the issue of Internment became a potential explosive point. In August, as PD point out, 5000 people marched under the leadership of the PHRC, without the support of Sinn Fein.

A potential clearly existed for a

growing mass movement independent of Sinn Fein. What happened to that potential? Did the question of Internment disappear? No. On the contrary the issue exploded in October when the Kesh was burned by the prisoners, sparking off the largest mass activity for years, a 3-day general strike in Derry, strikes and marches in Belfast, Newry, riots in Armagh etc. And the PHRC role in all this? Well, here PD's convenient loss of memory of all this is understandable if shamefully dishonest.

For, the fact is that PD and RMG in their characteristic ultra-leftist "wisdom" had decided, after the August demo, that the questions of Internment and Troops Out were no longer the important and mobilising issues. Instead the "real" questions and slogans were now considered to be the "imminent" loyalist "take-over", "civil war" and "return of the B.Specials".

"No new Stormont"; "No B.Specials" were to be the mobilising demands for the rebuilding of the mass movement. As the left in the SWM at the time, we argued in the PHRC violently against this ultra-leftist turn which we pointed out was in effect a recipe for passivity, offering the masses the perspective of joining the Provos and waiting for civil war. Thus as ever before, PD and MSR ended up capitulating to nationalism. Faced with the alternative of becoming recruiting sergeants for the Provos, SWM correctly walked out of the PHRC predicting again correctly that its "new" blustering posture about civil war, B.Specials, etc. would spell its end. One march was called under these slogans. Almost nobody turned up.

When the Kesh was burned the PHRC had squandered the small but significant potential it had shown in August. It was inactive.

The lessons of this period of the PHRC are clear to the IWG. PD and MSR bear most of the responsibility for its final collapse in a period when it might just have developed if a hard and serious line had been fought for. PD records none of this. So much for "learning the lessons" of its past "mistakes".

R.A.C., TORTURE & POLITICAL STATUS - WHERE TO NOW?

The following article is adapted for CLASS STRUGGLE from the intervention of the Irish Workers' Group at the conference of the Relatives Action Committee attended by 200 people on November 6th 1977.

FOR A UNITED FRONT AND WORKERS ACTION

The RAC has been in existence for nearly 18 months. Now is the time for a frank and honest balance-sheet of the struggle to defend political status. Despite the emergence of a number of local committees, and the tireless work of committee members, it is clear that the RAC has so far failed to stand at the head of a developing and confident mass movement, the only basis for winning political status. It is evident that in the face of increasing British Army terror, police torture etc., many among the anti-unionist population, in desperation, see only lawyers, the courts and Amnesty International as offering any kind of answer. If the RAC had really been growing, bringing more and more people into the streets in hope, confidence and determination, then many would have seen that mass activity as the only basis for a real solution to the Army, torture and state repression.

We believe that unless we take stock of the whole basis of the RAC, its political content and perspective, then not only the heroic struggle of the prisoners, the needs of anti-unionist workers but also the anti-imperialist struggle will suffer another major setback. No individual or group no matter how serious their involvement in the struggle must be allowed to put their own politics and goals before the objective needs of the struggle at this point. The sacrifices of thousands demand only methods which can concretely begin to show results and bring victory within our grasp. Those who are prepared to stand over ideas and methods which have clearly failed to achieve what is needed cannot be supported for one minute longer.

WHY IS THE R.A.C. FAILING?

The RAC has restricted its perspectives to the fight for political status. Many believe that this strengthens the struggle by avoiding the

danger of confusion with other "issues". We disagree. It weakens that struggle because it divorces the needs of the anti-unionist working class as a whole for a mass united and mobilised movement directed on the streets against the British Army, the RUC and repressive legislation from the defence of those who are at the heart of the fight, the prisoners.

At the moment it is obvious that the mass of the anti-unionist workers do not and will not support the RAC. Why? We believe that the answer is political. It stems from the fact that the armed struggle of the republican movement has never tactically been related to the needs of extending and deepening mass political activity on the streets as the highest priority of an offensive against the Northern state. The result of this has been to increasingly drive thousands who were once active in the struggle to the sidelines and passivity.

The bombing campaign, which was "justified" because it would economically force the British to withdraw, has only added confusion to that passivity, and demoralisation with the recognition that the British were not going to withdraw, economically, politically or militarily unless driven out. Unless we are prepared to learn the damage that false promises and false hopes of victory do to our own movement (they strengthen the enemy), we will lose this war. No tactic or method can be justified for a second if it weakens us and strengthens them.

At the moment we must soberly confront the fact that a credibility gap exists between us and the mass of anti-unionist workers. That gap will grow even wider unless we now prepare to establish both a new political perspective and a new organisational form which clearly expresses it.

We believe that such a perspective must recognise as a principle that the key issues of the British Army, the RUC, torture, Political Status, repressive legislation, etc., are inseparable aspects of the whole struggle of the anti-unionist working class to achieve national independence and socialism. As such they cannot, either politically or organisationally, be divorced from one another without risking more confusion and division within an already deeply divided movement.

Therefore, we must set up one form of organisation, the UNITED FRONT, which can, in a spirit of fraternal debate and discussion before the masses of anti-unionists, bring together on a common programme, workers, socialists and republicans.

Because the gap exists at the moment between the few and the many, calls for unity will not alone break it down. If they could, why hasn't it worked before now? The gap is caused by political confusion about the way forward. Many do not believe any more that the struggle can go forward on the basis upon which it is now being waged. Therefore we have to break down that wall of confusion by attacking it with the only weapons that can succeed - fraternal debate and discussion of the best methods of taking the struggle forward. This means the fight of the masses to both listen to and share in political debate. Only in this way truly testing the methods and programmes on the basis of experience of action and intervention can political confusion and passivity really be destroyed.

Those who say that political debate and discussion will divide us have to answer the question: why are we weak and divided now? Time is short. We need to be prepared to take the opportunity of this conference for a bold new initiative. For a workers' lead.

In the national struggle of the past, little use was made of the working class strength in the factories and work-shops, yet it is clear from the great 1918 General Strike against conscription, and the mass strikes in Belfast, Newry and Derry, that it has been just this power that the authorities have always feared. The

emergence of the West Belfast Workers' Action Council and the newly acquired confidence of the anti-unionist workers in economic struggles shows the real possibility of a new way forward. We must seek to draw, to the very heart of the United Front, groups of rank and file workers, shop steward committees, trade union branches where possible, and make the perspective of strike action our key aim.

The existence of the "Trade Union Campaign against Repression" in the North and in the South will make joint action between Northern and Southern trade unionists a practical and realistic possibility.

A FIGHTING PROGRAMME

At the moment, the issue which reveals in the clearest light to the mass of the anti-unionists that the nature of the state regime has not changed is the torture of prisoners. It is obvious that the SDLP is trying both to establish its dwindling credibility and deflect any potential for action. The Amnesty Report, however much we support it, cannot be the basis for a real investigation into the roots of the whole putrid system of police terror and prison violence. Therefore we fight for:

1. A WORKING CLASS INQUIRY under rank and file trade unionists' inspection and control into police methods of detention.

In order that the anti-unionist working class in particular and the Irish working class as a whole be fully aware of the whole system of terror, we must seek to expose the link between police detention methods and the prison and legal systems as a whole. Therefore we must demand that the inquiry has access to:

2. Open all state documents and records

- as a way of further showing the connections between these systems and the imperialist policies of the British Army, as well as the connections with economic interests of Irish, foreign and British Capitalism.

In order to protect the hundreds of young men and women brought before special courts and denied elementary democratic rights, we must seek to extend the struggle using all kinds of methods of direct action, including demonstrations, sit-downs and strike action where possible. Where such courts continue to be used against freedom fighters, we must fight to

DEFEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS -
3. ABOLISH ALL SPECIAL COURTS

Likewise, the existence of a whole arsenal of anti-democratic legislation has been used to bludgeon the resistance of the anti-imperialist movement. We must therefore extend our struggle for democratic liberties to:

4. ABOLISH ALL ANTI-DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATION

In order to strengthen that struggle we must seek to link up with rank and file workers and committees of struggle in the South facing similar attacks on democratic rights and practices from the Southern state. We must therefore fight for:

5. ALL-IRELAND RANK AND FILE TRADE UNION BASED COMMITTEES OPPOSED TO ALL FORMS OF STATE REPRESSIVE LEGISLATION WHETHER NORTH OR SOUTH.

In order to drive home the fact that we recognise that it is British Imperialism which is the cause of the war in Ireland, and those who have been in the vanguard of the struggle against it are not criminals, we must reject the branding of these freedom fighters as criminals. We must:

6. DEFEND POLITICAL STATUS

as the major slogan for bringing Irish trade unionists face to face with the real enemies of the working class in Ireland.

Because it is British Imperialism that is at the root of the war in Ireland we must not accept the right of any foreign or imperialist power or its native collaborators to gaoil men and women engaged in the war against imperialism. Therefore we must raise the demand and fight for:

7. RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS.

As the source of all terror in Ireland is the presence of British imperialism North and South, we must drive out the most naked expression of imperial presence in Ireland. Therefore we must demand:

8. BRITISH TROOPS OUT NOW
as the focus of activity of an all-Ireland struggle, based on rank and file trade unionists. As this struggle develops through marches, rallies, meetings and strikes, increasing use of the army and police to smash growing resistance must inevitably occur. Therefore, we must prepare to meet the need to defend ourselves and the mass struggle. We must call for:

9. THE ARMED FRONT OF WORKERS, SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS

In this context, the need for armed self-defence, we must seek to broaden the base of direct action of the largest section of our class and the oppressed generally, only an assembly which draws in delegates from factories, shops, small farms, local communities, neighbourhoods, etc., and organises them on the highest form of democratic struggle can meet the immediate needs of such a moment. We must raise the demand:

10. BUILD THE COUNCILS OF ACTION as the means of preparing the masses on a war-footing.

In the situation of the need for armed self-defence, and a growing network of action councils, Imperialism will seek to crush resistance using every means tried and tested from decades of class rule, using all its allies North and South. One of the most powerful and effective will be to rely upon deeply held illusions among many workers on the role of a parliamentary government as the means of "legislating" for "our interests". This is the perspective of the SDLP, the Irish Labour Party, Sinn Fein (The Workers Party), the "Communist" Party and the Trade Union Bureaucracy. Capitalism will use them.

All history has shown, and as recently as Chile in 1973 too, that the price for such a 'strategy' for ending the rule of capital is paid for by the

blood of tens of thousands of workers and oppressed people, and total defeat. Therefore, to counter this perspective we must have the slogan:

10. FOR A WORKERS' AND SMALL FARMER'S GOVERNMENT

- that is, the United Front of all workers, trade unionists and anti-imperialist parties on a programme which in effect stands over the gains and methods of the struggle of all the oppressed, including the armed self-defence of the masses, at the same time as it introduces rationalisation under workers control of all sections of monopoly capitalism whether foreign or native.

Being fully denied the use of their parliaments to dupe, mislead and divide the united power of workers and small farmers, imperialism will hurl the full might of armed strength against our forces. In order to paralyse their efforts, we must draw the full economic and political power of our class, here, in England and internationally into the struggle on our side. This means, concretely, in Ireland the call for

12. THE GENERAL STRIKE

- the full mobilisation of our class and an Irish Citizen Army, under the democratic control of Action Councils of workers as the preparation for the armed insurrection against the capitalist and imperialist system.

As a necessary political focus for this, we must raise the slogan

13. FOR A GOVERNMENT OF WORKERS COUNCILS AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

-involving the direct, democratic participation of the whole masses of the Irish working class and oppressed, and resting upon the dictatorship of the proletariat - the Irish Citizen Army, which based on the workers councils as the only means to defend our class, will mobilise and smash the rule of capitalism and imperialism. Forever.

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NO WAY FORWARD THIS WAY - R.A.C. CONFERENCE

200 people, mostly relatives of the prisoners, Provisional S.F. and left groups attended the conference. Despite existing for 18 months and building a number of local committees, at no time has the RAC shown that it can build a mass movement on the streets for political status.

However, none of these uncomfortable facts seemed to bother anyone at the conference. There was no attempt by anyone except the IWG to make an assessment of the struggle so far. The IWG believe that the RAC are not breaking through to the mass of anti-unionist workers in the North for the obvious reason that such a single issue campaign divorced from the political question of why the decline in the mass movement in the past four years, can only appeal to and get support from those directly involved and most committed to S.F. - the relatives.

The 'marxist' left have consistently given left cover to a fundamentally republican platform where no criticism of tactics or strategy, no alternative way forward or perspective is permitted to be put before the meetings.

To cover their naked opportunism the left call the RAC 'a broad front', i.e. something between a popular front and a united front. It is nothing of the kind! There is nothing in revolutionary marxist theory or practice which justifies the liquidation of one's own political platform to a petty bourgeois ideology. The 'broad front' of the RAC is the republican version of the popular front. As with the Irish Front in Derry (now defunct according to one of its members, the former Nationalist Party), the (IRSP) 'marxists' are involved in an exercise which if it even partially succeeds will strengthen republicanism, its methods and its ideas in the anti-unionist working class. And these are the 'marxists' who are going to 'unite the national and the class' questions?

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A WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ?

45.

On Oct. 1st and 2nd in Belfast a conference on Women's Liberation, attended by many small groups from throughout the 32 counties was clearly feminist as distinct from socialist in attendance and content. Reflecting the wretched state of the organised "women's movement" in Ireland it was largely inconclusive. This alone indicates the need shown more clearly by the 'socialist' contributions, for a basic marxist orientation to the question to be worked out on the Irish left which will not crumble in opportunist accommodation to feminism.

This article, adapted from the position put by IWG and the leaflet circulated at Belfast, is a contribution to the necessary debate on programme.

THE MODERN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

After World War II, two factors account for the emergence of the modern women's movement:

1. the expansion of post-war capitalism internationally, drawing into the workforce larger numbers of women than before in peacetime.
2. the outbreak of democratic struggles for national and ethnic freedom in Vietnam, Africa, America, Ireland, etc.

These economic and political conditions provided women of both middle and working class with the potentiality for struggle which encouraged the rebirth of a large if amorphous women's movement in the sixties and seventies.

FEMINISM

Due to the triumph of Stalinism and the degeneration of post-war Trotskyism, almost all of the revolutionary socialist tradition from Engels, Clara Zetkin and the Communist International of the 1920s was obliterated. The modern feminist movement, though having played a positive role in rediscovering the profoundly revolutionary analysis of the family in that tradition, has been unable to incorporate it within a revolutionary socialist perspective.

Thus, despite recognising working class women as the "most oppressed"

and recognising socialism as the necessary "material basis" for the full liberation of women, their "programmes" and schemes are rooted in utopianism.

They pose the possibility of "personal and psychological" emancipation either within existing class-divided society (feminism) or at least "running parallel" with the working class struggle to overthrow capitalism (socialist feminism). This utopianism is now most explicitly revealed in the refusal of feminists to recognise not only the class character and class allegiance of a women's movement, the necessity to orient it towards working class women in general and organised working class women in particular, but also their refusal to recognise the building of such a movement under the leadership and programme of a revolutionary marxist party.

Such a movement, therefore, cannot be a broad 'non-class' politically autonomous organisation. The latter, like Irish Women United, is petit-bourgeois to the core. A working-class women's movement must be seen and understood as a class component of the working class in general with the specific task of organising women independent of all bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideas and ideologies.

AGAINST ECONOMISM AND OPPORTUNISM

We argue for the above positions against the sectarianism of the Socialist Workers' Movement who see no need for a working women's movement at all, who would limit the "woman question" to Trade Union demands alone, who insist such a movement can be no more than a recruiting department of the party. We argue against the opportunism of MSR, ISP and PD who have accepted completely the feminist positions for an "all-class" women's movement.

We recognise the specific and dual nature of working class women's oppression and exploitation, rooted in the domestic slavery of the family under capitalism. We see this slavery as neither the product of male chauvinist or 'sexist' institutions but as central to the mechanisms of capitalist accumulation,

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the need to pay out of wages rather than out of surplus value for the social cost of reproduction, child-rearing, cleaning, feeding. For us, therefore, the fight for abortion on demand, contraception on demand, state-financed nurseries (24-hour) etc. are principal slogans to enable women to play a full and direct role in the organised struggle of their class for its emancipation.

CLASS DIVISION

In the last seven years the war in the North and the onset of economic creches within world capitalism has revealed all too sharply the weakness and division of the Irish working class and as a consequence the oppression of women intensified by the peculiar development of Ireland under capitalism. To begin the fight to rouse working women from passive acceptance of their political, economic, social and personal subjection, means that a particular programme and a specific form of organisation is needed.

In essence this programme must serve to link the specific form of slavery in the family to the question of women's inferior role in society and in production. Such a programme must be fought for primarily among the women workers already organised in the Trade Unions, for the simple reason that as they are collectively organised at the point of production they are the most advanced and politically the first to be drawn into struggles. This, of course, does not mean limiting such struggles to the factory or the shop floor. It means the political base of our strategy for a mass working class women's movement rests in the organised trade union movement North and South as elsewhere.

The fight for such a movement in the trade unions will mean opposition from trade union bureaucrats and Labour Party leaders, the churches and those in the republican movement sharing the right-wing views of the catholic church.

Revolutionary Marxists have to strive to organise women independently of these forces. This does not mean standing in isolation from the struggles of the working class or their mass organisations. It necessitates centrally, work in such

organisations and struggles, fighting to win militants to our programme and perspectives. Only in this way can a mass working class women's movement be built "autonomous" from the veto of bureaucrats or right-wingers, with its own democratically elected leadership at all levels, and the freedom of political tendency within it for revolutionaries to fight openly for its leadership and for the adoption of their programme.

Therefore, in the coming period we must begin the serious task of rallying, through debate and discussion, a revolutionary socialist tendency around a basic strategy and at the same time propagandise and agitate in the day to day struggles of working women for a mass working class women's movement.

ITS PROGRAMME MUST INCLUDE:

- FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK
- EQUAL PAY NOW.
- FULL SUPPORT FROM RANK AND FILE TRADE UNIONISTS FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN STRUGGLE
- EQUAL TREATMENT IN SOCIAL WELFARE & UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS
- EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO JOBS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- FOR UNION MEETINGS IN WORK TIME
- FOR CRECHES TO ENABLE WOMEN TO ATTEND
- FOR WOMEN'S CAUCUSES IN THE UNIONS
- FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND
- FREE CONTRACEPTION ON DEMAND
- DIVORCE AT THE REQUEST OF ONE PARTNER
- FOR A UNIVERSAL FREE SECULAR EDUCATION SYSTEM
- ABOLISH ALL ANTI-DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATION - REPRESSIVE LAWS, EMERGENCY POWERS, CENSORSHIP AND SPECIAL COURTS
- BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT

I W G A N D R E G R O U P M E N T

When the founding members of the Irish Workers' Group were expelled from the Socialist Workers' Movement two years ago, they immediately issued a statement to the left groups and papers (never published) in which they described the political basis of their opposition within that organisation, the bureaucratic nature of the SWM and the wholly undemocratic manner of our expulsion. The statement concluded with a call for regroupment and fusion of the left as a strategic priority in the fight for theoretical principle, political clarification and programmatic development. In the draft publication of the Irish Workers' Group manifesto, in November '76, and in the first issue of CLASS STRUGGLE in June '77, we further repeated and explained our position on regroupment. None of our articles was replied to by the representatives of the Left in Ireland.

Recently, the Independent Socialist Party has published a document "For Revolutionary Regroupment" which attempts to give reasons why and on what basis fusion of the left might take place. Further, a public meeting was organised by the ISP with invited speakers from PD, MSR and SWM to discuss the topic. As the IWG was not invited, one of our members at the meeting asked the ISP why. We were informed that because of the IWG's "sectarian" attacks on the rest of the Irish left we had effectively excluded ourselves. Such an "explanation" or an act of blatant political sectarianism comes suitably from a sect whose basic argument on the need for regroupment derives from an "analysis" which concludes that what essentially divides the left in Ireland is pettiness and organisational fetishism. It serves to underline further the IWG's view that on matters of principle in general the left are not only woolly and confused but profoundly unserious.

In this article we will spell out more fully the attitude of the Irish Workers Group to the question of regroupment and fusion, to the politics of the ISP as evinced by their article and to the nature and source of the very real differences within the Irish left.

When, as ex-members of the SWM, we called two years ago for regroupment and fusion of the left, we did so not merely because we were a handful of comrades spread over four cities, isolated from the class struggle and the relatively larger marxist and republican groupings. If indeed that had been our sole consideration we could justly have been accused of posing organisational solutions to our own isolation. No doubt our arguments to defend such a manoeuvre would have been couched in terms similarly vague, pious and abstract as those of the ISP in their document "For Revolutionary Regroupment". On the contrary, we did so for three reasons.

1. The total bankruptcy of the methods and solutions (the programmes) of the existing revolutionary and republican left as the basis for building a vanguard marxist party of the Leninist type in the Irish working class.
2. As a consequence of this failure, the fragmentation and splits among these groups, coupled with growing demoralisation and frustration of sections of militants in the working class movement, trade unions and Labour Party, and in the anti-imperialist forces.
3. The international crisis of leadership in the working class globally at a period of heightening class struggle (revolutionary and pre-revolutionary situations in Portugal and Spain, economic and social upheaval in Italy, France and Britain) making urgent the task of a serious analysis of the strategy and tactics of the marxist tendencies in living struggles as the only principled basis for the re-elaboration of a New International and programme.

- Therefore, in the documents of the IWG we have begun
1. to re-outline the ABC of the marxist tradition as codified in the programmes of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International, i.e.
 - a. the programme, method and experience of the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky,
 - b. the defence and development of Bolshevism undertaken by Trotsky

and the Left Opposition in the battle against the Stalinist counter-revolution, culminating in the fight for the Fourth International incorporated in the Transitional Programme of 1938.

2. In the light of these traditions and the method inherent within them of revolutionary Bolshevism in action, to analyse and evaluate the tactics, strategy and programmes of the various marxist tendencies in Ireland and internationally.

3. To pose our own tactical and strategic alternatives to the centrist and opportunist politics of the marxist and republican left as part of a principled process to create a collective leadership of revolutionary socialists wedded intransigently to the struggle for theoretical clarity, merciless self-criticism, revolutionary activism, unbending hostility to capitalism, loyalism, clericalism, and all ideologies and currents which stand in any way for their continuation.

Therefore, our documents frankly and sharply addressed themselves to the record of the Irish left and drew firm and harsh conclusions about that record. We have been accused by the Irish left of egotism, of claiming a monopoly of the truth. These accusations were entirely predictable. Rather than seeing our polemics as laying the basis for a principled and sharp debate on strategy, tactics, programme - the issues that do divide the left - the ISP, the IRSP, and the SWP have accused us of "sectarianism" thus again displaying utter confusion about marxist terminology. For marxists sectarianism is a concept characterising tactics and strategy. For liberals its use refers simply to what they ignorantly regard as the 'abusive-ness' and 'congenital' divisiveness of the left. We refute completely the charge of political sectarianism. As we have shown, it is the Irish left who have combined the worst excesses of opportunism with sectarian manoeuvring on matters of political principle. We are not in the least surprised that they regard our use of "labels" unhelpful to debate and discussion. As Trotsky never tired of pointing out in his fight in his fight against the centrists of the 1930s who opposed him tooth and nail:-

"Without plumbing the gist of programmatic differences they repeat commonplaces on the 'impossibility' of any one tendency claiming to incorporate in itself all the truth. Ergo? Live and let live. Aphorisms of this type cannot teach an advanced worker anything worthwhile; instead of courage and a sense of responsibility they can only instil indifference and weakness ...revolutionary ardour in the struggle for socialism is inseparable from the struggle for truth." (1938 writings)

The Irish left's wish to avoid "sectarian" labels reveals all the more the nature of their politics. As if serious marxists can throw away the only precise and scientific language of analysis, if used correctly, and still claim the use of a living and creative instrument for intervention.

No! The reality is harsh. The left's thin-skinned responses to our attack are no more than their evasion of debate. For them to have to seriously characterise the Irish Workers Group politically and scientifically would demand an examination of our strategy and tactics, our political method, our interpretation and identification with the marxist tradition. To do this effectively would in turn require examination of their own political and theoretical traditions, the drawing up of a serious balance sheet of their activities in the last six years. Rather than do this, they will go on abusing us mindlessly.

THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST PARTY

The ISP emerged around a number of individuals associated with the "marxist" left in the IRSP who walked out of that organisation 18 months ago. The record of these lefts within the IRSP, at one time the most healthy leftward-moving current in left republican politics, represented 'the most shameful capitulation to the worst forms of conspiratorial republicanism and demagogic sloganising. Despite having the majority in the National Committee, despite having conference resolutions of the most impeccable socialism, the marxist left lacked the most elementary understanding of how to hold the firm ground of principle and on that basis conduct a tactical fight to rid the organisation of its right wing. Their 'marxism' was revealed as a soggy mess of platitudes,

totally incapable of being employed as a method of analysis, or a tool of intervention, orientation and struggle. No fight occurred! The left, increasingly outmanoeuvred and divided in itself, simply fell apart. Eventually, a disparate group resigned, only to disintegrate further - some returning to the IRSP as convinced republicans, others to sterile scholasticism, others still to the limbo land of their "careers". Part of the present leadership of the ISP bear full responsibility for what happened to the IRSP. The most hopeful opportunity for establishing a genuine working class marxist movement was completely destroyed without even the need to analyse the lessons of this tragic episode being even recognised before the emergence of a new tendency should begin. This, at least, would have enabled the marxists to clarify their understanding of theory, strategy and programme and incorporate the lessons within a more fully developed political perspective. Instead, after months inside the sterile gasbag of the "Irish Committee for a Socialist Programme", a new "party" was announced on the basis of a "programme" of soggy platitudes - as in the IRSP. Recruitment of the most politically raw individuals began. It was immediately evident that the leadership of the ISP had learnt nothing from their experiences. The ISP's "Five-Eight" and "Hard Station" reveal that one form of right-opportunism (left-republicanism) has been replaced by another form of left-opportunism, economism and workerism.

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party, and of how it fulfills in practice its obligations towards the class and towards the labouring masses. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the surroundings which created it, to study attentively the means of correcting it - these are the signs of a serious party. This means the performance of its duties, this means educating and training the class, and subsequently the masses. By neglecting this, by failing to proceed with the utmost care, attention and prudence to investigate their self-evident mistakes the left proved themselves not to be a class party but a circle of

intellectuals, and a handful of workers who imitate the worst characteristics of the intellectual".
(Lenin - Left-Wing Communism.)

The ISP document on regroupment illustrates our criticisms even more clearly. Devoid of any concrete political analysis of political traditions or programmes, period or perspective, its facile impressionism leads to the ISP conclusion that a "united" revolutionary left will represent a "strong" current on the basis of agreement on a list of worthless platitudes. The IWG rejects this document completely. "Unity" on the basis proposed is at best an opportunistic manoeuvre naively undertaken by the ISP, and cynically by the SWP to recruit members to their economic perspectives of party-building. It is regrettable that the ISP display again the same frivolous complacency, the same arrogant indifference to theoretical and political principle so evident in their time in the IRSP.

O U R D I F F E R E N C E S

Unlike the ISP, we do not believe that the divisions among the left are, at base, superficial. It is no doubt true that petty factionalism needlessly exists but it is more a symptom than a cause of the differences.

It is obvious that the left internationally is in disarray and impotent as a force for real intervention in the struggle for working class power. Any attempt to explain the fragmentation of the Irish left must also at the same time relate to the political and programmatic crisis of leadership existing on a world scale.

The origins of the divisions within the marxist left are rooted in the fragmentation of the world Trotskyist movement after the death of Trotsky, the decimation of the most experienced cadres in the war and the emergence of a new world order. The objective factors of the defeat of the working class by fascism and Stalinism, the hegemonic role of American Imperialism, provided the basis for an unparalleled development of productive forces underpinning both the economic prosperity and political stability in west European capitalist states. This new world order posed for the then inexperienced and weak forces of the Fourth International problems of analysis from which only the creative

re-elaboration of the Transitional Programme in the light of a changed historical reality could have spelt out a new strategic and tactical path for international proletarian power. Instead, the Fourth International failed to redefine its perspectives adequately or unanimously, the Trotskyist movement split into a series of groupings and sub-groupings. Basically the worldwide divisions of the Trotskyist left relate to their understanding and use of the world programme embodied in the Fourth International in 1938. It is from this relationship that one can best recognise the serious and profound differences of method employed by the differing national and international currents of modern Trotskyism. The particular debates and issues, the questions still remaining to be resolved, underlying this historical division deserve a separate and detailed treatment. Broadly, however, there are three major positions.

1. THE FETISHISTS

In this category fall the W.R.P. in Britain, Workers' League in Ireland. It represents the most dead-end sectarian perspective for whom the world stood still in 1938 with the Transitional Programme. Forever proclaiming the "imminent" collapse of capitalism these groups combine the most sectarian and factional self-promotion of their own organisation, ritualistically denouncing "revisionism" with the most opportunistic softness on reformism, a position defended by applying a few "correct" slogans from the Transitional Programme.

The League for a Workers Republic (Section of the Organisation for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International) represents in Ireland a special category of this current. Afflicted with the same spirit of catastrophism and the ritual borrowing from the Transitional Programme (see their 1977 Conference documents in Workers Republic), the LWR's perspective involves waiting for the masses to catch up with the Transitional Programme, and that, indeed, through the Irish Labour Party. This reduces them in practice to a passive propaganda sect accomodating at every turn around a minimum programme to every left-reformist current in Labour Party and Trade Union bureaucracy.

2. THE ECLECTICS

This current, represented by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International was the only one to attempt to positively react to the changed world conditions facing revolutionary socialists in the Fourth International. In Ireland it is now represented by the Movement for a Socialist Republic. However, the total failure of the USFI to ground their theoretical, strategic and tactical positions in a concrete political economy of the new world order meant it was wholly incapable of translating the ideas and method into living struggle in the working class. It developed a chronic ideological instability either stridently ultra-leftist or supinely opportunist (the present tactical orientation being blatant capitulation to reformism, whether of the Trade Union Bureaucracy, Labour left or Stalinism). The MSR, like the USFI in general held a position on the Permanent Revolution which identified the Provisional-spearheading of the national struggle with the working class leadership of that "struggle," in effect obliterating the need for a working class marxist programme and party. The USFI sees the Transitional Programme as a storehouse of handy slogans to dignify their theoretical and political distortions. All concrete questions of revolutionary practice are dissolved into a grand picture of historic "process" of the "revolution" with slogans of the Transitional Programme signposting the way. At the moment, underneath reams of blustering proclamations the MSR systematically and supinely tails trade union bureaucracy, feminists, and nationalists. On the question of fighting unemployment it proposes a "national plan", like the trade union bureaucracy, offering no political content and at the same time completely ignores the question of the state as outlined in the last issue of Class Struggle in "communists in the trade unions".

3. THE NEGATIVES

This ideological current is represented by those tendencies who after the failures of the Fourth International and the split of 1951 rejected both the Fourth International and the Transitional Programme itself. The best known example of this current

is the I.S. group, now SWP, in Britain and its sister-group SWM in Ireland. In rejecting the Transitional Programme of 1938 as irrelevant to the 50s, 60s and 70s, the IS were inevitably to reject the whole idea of a transitional programme as relevant. In doing so, IS and SWM rejected the possibility of elaborating a programme except as a result of a mass party already having been built. In turn they further reject the possibility of building a new international without similar mass parties existing. In essence a purely organisational concept, this tradition has returned to the programmatic traditions of the Second International - a minimum/maximum programme in which the day-to-day struggles for reforms (minimum) are divorced from any struggle for workers' power (the maximum), e.g. workers control is not seen as a transitional and fighting perspective but as something to be implemented after the revolution, and national unity similarly, at root.

It thus rejects the whole creative development of theory and practice, party and class, programme and strategy established by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917 and codified in the first four Congresses of the Third International. The practice of the I.S. and the S.W.M. is basically perspectiveless, resting upon the semi-spontaneous consciousness of trade union struggles to build a revolutionary marxist party. Any attempt to intervene in all struggles of the class on the basis of a scientifically worked-out programme and strategy, revising and elaborating it in the light of experience, new and broader tasks etc. in order to raise every struggle to the sharpest point of conflict and the highest form of revolutionary political clarity and class consciousness, is attacked by SWP and SWM as giving magical significance to a programme. Thus, the dogmatists who fetishise the 1938 Transitional Programme and those who recoil in horror at any kind of programme are united in having no living theory to guide their activities and develop their perspectives. They are, in consequence, both crudely economic and workerist. Both pose abstractly the building of the "party" and "socialism" as the answer to the concrete needs of millions of workers

facing unemployment, wage freezes, inflation, repression, denial of civil and political rights etc. Increasingly unable to offer a concrete political strategy to answer these needs, these groups retreat to an increasing sectarianism concealed by adventurist ultra-leftism. In Britain the SWP, unable to analyse reformism and apply the tactic of the United Front, poses itself as the alternative organisationally to the Labour Party and is already on the way to becoming another W.R.P. In Ireland SWM has shown the same tendencies in its attempts to get a "right to work" march off the ground last autumn, in its involvement in the unemployed action committees in the worthless stunt of "free bus fares". In conditions least suitable for repeating the significant but superficial gains of the IS group, SWM has made no solid gains anywhere. Though still confirmed in its smug, self-satisfied feet-on-the-ground realism, it is the realism of a narcissist.

The ISP in its present form operates with much less sophistication on the same ideological terrain of the SWM: a purely formal commitment to Marxism and Trotskyism.

The Militant group in the Labour Party, while claiming to be Trotskyist and claiming allegiance to the Transitional Programme, are vulgar evolutionists in theory and parliamentary reformists in practice. Their British section have consistently refused to call for British Troops out of Ireland, in effect bulwarking the most virulent chauvinism in the British Labour movement. In Ireland the Militant combine the most worthless resolutionism in the trade unions and the Labour Party with an actual defence of the Coalition and the Labour Party leadership. After four years of Labour/Fine Gael misrule the Militant group are no stronger in the party and the unions, yet they interminably predict the most catastrophic explosion of class struggle. Militant's sole perspective is a Labour Party majority government in five or ten years time on a tame reformist platform. Some revolution!

THE IRISH WORKERS GROUP

We hold that the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International represented the international programmatic conclusion to the continuous political battles waged by Trotsky in the Left Opposition, then in the I.C.L. against Stalinism, centrism and reformism in the world working class movement. It therefore represented an international programmatic alternative to both the Second and Third Internationals. Its purpose was to become an instrument in the hands of revolutionary workers and intellectuals in order to bring the working class internationally onto a war footing.

It was a programme which, while starting from the immediate needs of the working class to defend itself, sought to carry the struggle inexorably to the goal of workers power. Trotsky creatively applied and developed the major tactical and strategic principles of Lenin and of the first four Congresses of the Comintern. He did this in the context of the Stalinist counter-revolution, imminent fascist take-over, deepening economic and political crisis pointing towards a new world war.

Thus, the transitional Programme of 1938 is nothing else but re-elaboration of the transitional method first clearly outlined by Lenin in April and September 1917 and further embodied in the programmatic theses of the 1919-1922 Congresses. The transitional method represents the highest programmatic and strategic development of communism in the epoch of Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism. It is the only means whereby the historic political and theoretical principles of the First International, the Paris Commune, the Second International and the Communist International could be concretely and creatively applied in a new epoch to pose the way forward from the immediate struggle of the working class to the overthrow of capitalism itself.

We reject completely the fetishisation of the 1938 Transitional Programme in one form or another by the representatives of the OCRFI or the USFI. Both these international currents have proved themselves ideologically and organisationally bankrupt. However, in rejecting the fossilised 1938

programme we in no way identify with those who, in rejecting it, also repudiate the basic traditions, principles and method represented by that programme. These groups are equally bankrupt.

We believe that fidelity to the 1938 Programme and its method, to the traditions of the Comintern in its first four Congresses, is fidelity to revolutionary scientific marxism in its historically most developed form in the epoch of monopoly capitalism. In the new period of world capitalist crisis we have experienced in the 60s and 70s, this fidelity demands the re-elaboration of a new Transitional Programme and the building of a new International around it. It is abundantly clear that the solutions of Stalinists, reformists and economists have nothing to offer the working class in terms of coherent political strategy. In Ireland particularly, the working class need political solutions which relate specifically to the dimensions of the international crisis peculiar to an imperialised economy, and which offer a coherent interconnected and strategic alternative to their false answers, whether republicans, stalinists, reformists, rank-and-filists etc.

On the basis of such a strategy, organisations of struggle must be built which will not collapse when faced with the existing leaderships in the working class and anti-imperialist movement. At the very centre of such a perspective must be a governmental answer to deprive the ruling class not simply of parliamentary office but also of control over the real state forces, army, police, bureaucracy, economy. Such a governmental answer does not mean taking over the existing machinery of class rule. Instead it represents the central link in a strategic and tactical chain of slogans, demands and organisational forms which have as their starting point the immediate and most pressing needs of struggles of millions of workers and their families, and leads necessarily when taken up by workers, to the breaking up of the state machinery and replacing it with democratic organs of working class power. It is the

continued:

perspective of a workers government, a specific form of the United Front tactic. As such, it is an absolutely integral part of the transitional method. While being directed to the basic question of what kind of government does the working class need to defend itself concretely against the ravages of the ruling class measures and policies, it poses solutions for the rank and file organs of struggle which if taken up and implemented by the masses, lead step by step to a situation of civil war and the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The workers government slogan is, therefore, a transitional means of concretely preparing the working class for these steps. At the same time it offers the only means of breaking the working class from the hold and illusions of reformism and reformist parties. It does not replace the need for a revolutionary mass party and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Irish Workers Group believes that the Irish Marxist left must begin seriously to address itself to the theoretical and political task of elaborating such a programme. We do not believe this is a recipe for a scholastic retreat from the need to intervene where possible in the living struggles of the Irish working class on the basis of already worked out alternatives.

The initiation of principled debate and discussion will be the first major step towards the creation of a collective marxist leadership alone capable of providing the intellectual and theoretical resources adequate both to programme-development and serious party-building.

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